Manuale di Teologia Cristiana

PREFACE

THE pages which are here submitted to the public are the result of the work of the past thirty years with successive classes of students. The lectures were revised and enlarged with each successive delivery, and several times entirely re-written in the effort to meet the questions of current thought, and once with a special view of helping Japanese students who must approach the study of Christian truth from a point of view quite different from that of their European brethren. The principle which underlies the entire work was forced upon the writer while still a youthful pastor striving to minister to the spiritual wants of a congregation in which were a number of keen young men familiar with the current scepticism of forty years ago. In striving to meet this he found that the apologetics of the eighteenth century were of little or no service. The questions of historical criticism, of scientific objection, and of pan-theistic and materialistic philosophy were so

new in form and principle that the old defences offered no satisfaction. In fact in striving to help others, he found his own faith put to the test. His sole anchorage in this conflict was the inner assurance of faith. In the quiet of closet communion all doubt as to the essential truth of Christianity as a faith of the heart in God and in His word disappeared before the assurance of faith. It was soon clear to him that this rather than rational, scientific, or historical investigation, must in the very nature of the case be the basis of the faith of the great majority of mankind. Even his acute and scholarly young hearers in busy professional life could give to such questions only the most superficial attention. His own busy pastorate made it difficult if not impossible to himself to do justice to any one of the fields opened up by the current thought of the age. And if this was the case with college-bred men, what of the masses of mankind? This forced him back upon the fundamental question of the true foundation of all certainty in religion. The answer to the question the reader will find imperfectly presented in the present work, together with a humble attempt from such foundation to

reconstruct theology. He hopes that the truth is the old truth in its evangelical fulness, and that his readers will be able each one for himself to carry forward to greater completeness the work here begun. In this hope it is offered to the Christian student with the prayer that God may graciously condescend to use it for His glory. N. B.

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INDUCTIVE THEOLOGY

INTRODUCTION

CHAPTER I

RELIGION AND THEOLOGY

RELIGION is an existing fact both in human nature and in human history. It is therefore a proper subject for scientific investigation.

The most casual examination of the facts of religion will show us that it embraces three elements: 1st, Sentiment or feeling, which may vary from dread, fear, awe, reverence, to trust and love. 2nd, Ideas or conceptions of the unseen object of these feelings and of our relations to Him. 3rd, Acts of worship and service founded on these feelings and ideas, and giving practical expression to them.

Religion may thus be defined as the relation of man's heart and life to God as the unseen power of the Universe. These definitions apply to all religions, perfect or imperfect, true or false, natural or supernatural. Every historical religion has some feeling toward God, some idea of Him, and expresses both by some form of worship.

These elements of religion, as facts of human nature and history, may be studied in various

ways. As elements in the constitution of human nature they may be studied as a department of psychology; as giving rise to various cults and to peculiar customs of different races, they may be studied as a department of anthropology; or they may be treated as a distinct science, the science of comparative religion. In each of these three methods of treatment the interest is purely scientific. The student may or may not be a religious man; *i.e.* himself a believer in religion and religious truths. He simply proceeds by the usual method of analysis and generalization in dealing with attested and existent facts.

An entirely different interest arises and an entirely different method of procedure results when the student approaches the study of religion for the purpose of perfecting his own religious life and that of his fellow-men. He deals now no longer with the mere facts in the causes and methods of their occurrence, but with the inner nature of the facts. His questions now are: Are these feelings right or wrong? Are these ideas true or false? Are these actions reasonable and proper, or absurd and unworthy? He is even thrown back to a more fundamental investigation. Is religion a true and essential element of human life? or is it an imperfection, an accidental excrescence, to be removed as speedily as it can be done with safety?

The answer to these questions must be found in an examination of the second element in our

definition of religion. We can only judge of the right or wrong of our feelings toward God and of the propriety or absurdity of our acts of worship and service when we have examined the truth or falsity of our ideas of God and of our relation to Him. Again, having settled the right and truth of religion in general, we can only hope to perfect our religious life by the aid of true conceptions of God and of our relation to Him. Theology is the science which deals with this field of truth in this religious interest.

THEOLOGY.

In every science it is of the utmost importance that we define clearly the province of our investigation and the method by which it is to be conducted. The province of theology is the truth concerning God and our relations to Him as it has been revealed to man's religious faith and has entered into his religious life. Its duty is to separate this truth from error and to present it in the unity of scientific form. Theology is on one side nearly related to, yet distinct from, philosophy. Philosophy seeks for the ultimate cause of all being and the relation of all being to the first cause; but it pursues this investigation by the aid of the fundamental principles of pure reason and the laws of human thought. It apprehends the first cause by the light of reason; theology by the light of religious faith. Science also seeks for an ultimate cause, or

rather unity of cause, but it proceeds upon the basis of facts observed by the senses. If it passes beyond this limit it becomes philosophy. Theology, philosophy, and science, are thus intimately related. They all point in the same direction, but each along its own pathway. They should never be confused. They should be mutually helpful. But they can be made so only by perfect confidence each in the other, and by each conscientiously cultivating its own field without jealousy of its neighbour. Their final perfection will be a perfect harmony of results.

The comparative science of religions also lies very near to the province of theology. An important element of science must be the study of the theologies or mythologies of the several religions, *i.e.* of their conceptions of God. But comparative religion deals with these in their origin, their historical development and their mutual inter-relations. It treats them as historical facts, leaving the essential truth or falsity of each as a matter for separate investigation. It is evident that this can never be determined, and should not even be prejudged by the facts of origin and development. For the settlement of this question the tests of truth must be applied to the thing itself, and these tests must be such as are applicable to the thing in its own nature. We cannot test colour by the ear, or music by the eye. So in this field, theology has its own province and must proceed by its appropriate methods.

We conclude, then, that the province of theology

is to ascertain the truth which is apprehended in religious faith, to separate that truth from error, to present it in unity of scientific system, and to demonstrate its harmony with all related truth.

THEOLOGICAL METHOD.

Theology, like science and philosophy, must proceed by a right method if it is to succeed in its task. Method is concerned with both the collection and the treatment of material. In the physical and natural sciences the materials are obtained through the senses, and method in the collection of material in this field is chiefly concerned with accuracy of observation. The facts of nature are ultimate things. Science may not criticise or question them. Her only duty is to know them accurately, not to mistake them. Having so collected her materials she treats them by inductive processes, *i.e.* she analyses, compares and classifies her facts, and seeks to reach general facts which she calls laws. This is the inductive method. In the mathematical sciences, on the other hand, the materials are certain fundamental principles which we say cannot be otherwise. Two and two not only are four, but cannot but be four. Things equal to the same thing are and cannot but be equal to each other; that is, we cannot think otherwise. These are the necessary laws which govern our conceptions of number and of space. From these first principles we proceed to deduce conclusions

by the syllogistic process. If the process is perfect the conclusion is as certain as the fundamental axioms. This is the deductive method. It is introduced into the physical and natural sciences in the formation of hypotheses and theories. The true scientist, however, always distinguishes these from his ascertained results, *i.e.* inductions carefully worked out. So in the mathematics we help the child whose apprehension of number is still undeveloped by a numeral frame. A true mathematician scorns such assistance.

The mathematician thus builds with necessary truth, the scientist with observed truth, and their methods of treatment vary accordingly.

Philosophy, like mathematics, builds upon what it takes to be necessary truth, and likewise largely follows the deductive method and seeks to establish its conclusions as necessary truth. It has, however, in all ages arrived at certain ultimate contradictions which it has not been able to remove, and which show that the task is beyond the finite mind. We may be able to follow the necessary relations of finite space and number, and yet not of infinite and absolute being.

In theology in the past the favourite method has been the deductive. We have treated the truths revealed to religious faith as necessary truths, and we have boldly proceeded to evolve them into a deductive system, partly by combination within themselves and partly by intermixture with our favourite philosophy. Has not this method been the source both of confusion and

of error? To accept the inductive method is, it is true, a humbler pathway, but much safer. The truths of religion may be necessary truths. They certainly so appear to religious faith. The religious faith cannot but conceive of truth, holiness and love as attributes of God. Some of them so appear even to pure reason. But do we not pass the limits of our powers when we proceed to conclusions as to what God must be and do, involving long deductive processes and the intermingling of much philosophy? We have, therefore, concluded that the inductive method is the safer in the study of theology, and will enable us with much more assurance to confine ourselves to our own province.

The inductive method is also in harmony with the processes by which religious truth comes to men. While in all cases it must ultimately be received as an inward conviction, and in that respect resembles intuitive and necessary truth, yet these convictions in all religions arise from facts of nature, history, or individual life which are regarded as revealing God, or from the teaching of men regarded as specially qualified to interpret these facts. These facts and teachings constitute the revelation of God to the race as distinguished from the revelation to or in each individual, and it is with this wider revelation that theology has to do, and such a revelation, if it really exists, clearly must be treated by the inductive method. We must study it as it is, not as we think it ought to be.

The materials of theology, whether they consist of traditional teachings or sacred books, recorded historical facts or facts of nature and daily human life, must be treated inductively; *i.e.* they must be accurately observed and understood, and then so collected as to present us with their whole volume of religious truth.

But granting that our theology is to be chiefly an inductive science, each inductive science has its own method of observation and its own tests of accuracy in the definition of truth. The balance in chemistry, measurement in physics, the microscope in biology, statistics in economics are familiar examples. And not only the instrument but also the observer must be fitted for his work. Gifts of nature and acquired skill are necessary to the highest efficiency. So here spiritual truth must be judged by spiritual tests and by spiritual men. The inductive method must be adapted to religious truth.

The primary requisite therefore to a student of theology is strong, clear religious faith. Without this he is blind, has no eyes to see that for which he is seeking. This religious faith must be pure as well as active and strong. Its purity is secured only by placing it in right relation to reason on the one side and to conscience on the other. If, through lack of exercise of sound reason and intelligence, it admits into its temple false notions and imaginations it becomes superstition, and is worshipping a lie. If through lack of attention to the holy voice of conscience it admits unclean

things, religion may become vile as well as superstitious. Pure religion and undefiled arises from religious faith guarded by reason and conscience. It seeks truth in the field of religion just as conscience seeks truth in the region of morals and reason seeks truth in the region of knowledge.

CHAPTER II

CRITERIA OF TRUTH IN THEOLOGY

TRUTH is that in human thought which corresponds to reality or fact in being. Such truth is either general or particular, the widest extension belonging to that which we call necessary truth. Science ever seeks the wider truth, philosophy the necessary and universal. Religious truth is general and universal in the highest sphere, that of spiritual being.

How do we know truth as truth? Especially, how may we know religious truth? What is the nature and what are the means of certainty?

That these questions are as necessary in the sphere of religious truth as in that of science or philosophy is evident, inasmuch as out of the ultimate facts of nature, history and individual life upon which religion is based have come not only widely various and incompatible religious systems, but almost endless variety of individual notions and beliefs. This by no means implies that truth and certainty are beyond our reach in the field of religion. The same variations present themselves in the history of science and philosophy. They but prove to us that truth and certainty

must be sought and can be found only by the most painstaking effort.

Certainty as a state of mind is reached by various processes.

1. In the use of the five senses.
2. In self-consciousness.
3. The pure reason apprehending necessary truth.
4. The moral intuition.
5. The aesthetic intuition.
6. The religious intuition (the basis of faith).
7. Spiritual consciousness.

These are the primary channels of certainty. They may be confirmed by the process of verification and extended to new aspects of the truth by inductive or deductive reasoning.

These several means of certainty correspond to the various fields of our knowledge. The senses give us certainty of the facts of the material world. By consciousness we apprehend and become certain of the activities of our own minds. Pure reason gives us certainty of necessary truth, that which must be. The moral intuition yields conviction of the right, the aesthetic of the beautiful, the religious of the good, which is in God alone. The last which we have called spiritual consciousness may be questioned by many; but we venture to think that the truly spiritual man will both understand it and recognise its validity. In the deepest religious communion is there not a direct sense of the Divine presence? not a mere faith in God's existence, but an immediate per-

sonal consciousness of God which fills the soul with reverential and adoring love and joy? But even to those who cannot go beyond a strong faith that God is, we may illustrate spiritual consciousness. Whenever friend meets friend, is there not something more than that which the eye sees, the ear hears, or the hand feels, a consciousness of spiritual presence which is, indeed, meditated by the outward and visible, but which stops not there? From such consciousness comes our deepest certainty of honesty, of sympathy, of love; or, on the other hand, of hate, deceit and malignity. We venture to think that some of the deepest facts of our nature will be overlooked if we do not recognise this means of certainty.

These are our primary means of certainty. The truth reached through these may be expanded by various processes of reasoning, inductive and deductive. But the certainty of these results is never greater than that of the primary elements, and is always subject to the errors possible in the process of reasoning. Hence absolute certainty in reasoned results is possible only where the nature of the subject, the means of its apprehension, and the reasoning processes all admit of confidence that we have excluded error. Our best example of this is furnished by the pure mathematics. In almost all other fields the certainty of our reasoned results is one of degree; and as in practical life some element of reason enters into all our thoughts, even the certainty of that which we see and hear is qualified at least as a foundation for

scientific knowledge. Hence the absolute demand in the scientific field for *verification*. The seeker after truth has learned to doubt, and must verify his convictions or, as he modestly calls them, his first impressions, that he may arrive at more perfect certainty. This, again, does not invalidate our knowledge or destroy our faith in certainty. It only shows that all true certainty is to be attained by the exercise of the highest moral qualities.

There are three processes of verification employed, not only in scientific investigation but in the concerns of ordinary life in which we wish to reach a higher certainty. These are: (1) Comparison of different methods of observation or different observations leading to the same result. (2) Harmony of results. (3) Elimination of all contradictory hypotheses. Every schoolboy is familiar with the use of these processes in mathematics. He uses the first when he adds his columns downwards to prove his addition, the second when he casts out the nines or adds remainder to subtrahend, and the third in the *reductio ad absurdum* employed by Euclid. The chemist verifies by repeating and by varying his experiments, the astronomer by finding that observation corresponds to calculation. In religious truth we shall find that verifications similar to these are possible for the assurance of our faith.

The seven primary means of certainty which we have enumerated are distinguished from each other by variation in one important element, that

of sensation or emotion. In vision among the senses and in pure reason the emotional element is almost entirely absent. In the sense of feeling and in the moral, aesthetic and religious intuition it is essentially present. Sir William Hamilton has propounded a law that in our cognitive faculties intelligence is in inverse ratio to feeling. This principle has been popularly applied to religious faith as a means of apprehending truth. A religious man is governed by his feelings, and hence it is supposed that his conceptions of truth are not trustworthy. To this it may be replied that Sir William Hamilton's law applies to reflective or reasoned cognition rather than to the direct intuition on which certainty is based. While the emotional element which accompanies intuition may exclude or interfere with a reasoning process, it does not exclude certainty. On the contrary, it renders it all the more certain. There is no uncertainty about a burnt finger, although there may be confusion as to how it happened. The certainty of the fundamental fact revealed in the intuition is increased, and not diminished, by the emotion or sensation which accompanies it.

We are now prepared to enquire which of these means of certainty are available for the direct and assured apprehension of religious truth? which for its verification? and which as contributory to it?

To answer these questions we must take a more definite survey of the field in which re-

ligious truth is disclosed and of the manner in which it has been presented to mankind. The lowest forms of religion will perhaps afford the simplest illustration.

The earliest element of any religious faith is the recognition of God in the great works of nature. The sun, the starry heavens, a great thunderstorm, a lofty mountain, will excite even in the savage a feeling of awe and a sense of a being inconceivably greater than himself. The most rudimentary and the most perfect religions unite here. This recognition of God is not a scientific or a philosophical apprehension of a cause or author of these vast works; it is rather a feeling of a presence in them of an unseen being. It is not the work of reason predicating a cause; it is rather an impulse to worship with reverential fear. This impulse precedes all investigation of science or reflection of philosophy. These may, in some minds, by producing a greater familiarity with the outward phenomena, diminish the religious impulse and apprehension. In devout minds, which penetrate more deeply, they will increase that apprehension, giving it only a more spiritual form.

If this is a true representation of the simplest and most universal appearance of religious faith, we can now analyse it as related to our sense of certainty or conviction of truth.

First of all, this apprehension of an unseen being is not the mere observation of the senses. He is not directly seen, or heard, or felt. We

see the lightning, we hear the thunder, we feel the pelting storm. But even the savage mind separates these from the object of which it is afraid. As soon as universal literature begins to express these first religious ideas in words, it makes these things seem the servants or the habitation of its God. "He shoots out his lightnings"; "He sends forth his thunderbolts"; "He rides on the wings of the wind." The senses merely give us the facts in which God is discerned. They minister to our religious faith, but do not directly produce it.

So again this religious faith cannot be ascribed to self-consciousness. This takes cognizance of it, assures us of its existence, and enters into it as it does into all other mental states and acts. But in all this it only helps into distinct spiritual existence that which has its own independent origin. Is then this apprehension of an unseen being the work of reason? We think not. First, it precedes the conscious exercise of reason. As Mr Watson truly says, no people have developed either philosophy or science except those who have been first religious. Conscious reason inquiring for a cause is a second thought; religion is a first thought. Nor is it that unconscious reason which governs even the most rudimentary thought, for this is a conscious conviction, or at least apprehension; that is, a mere order or form, controlling thoughts which have their direct origin in the senses.

We are thus thrown back for the origin of this

religious idea upon the next class of means of certainty, those by which we discern the great attributes of real being, beauty, right, goodness, and with that the total of these or God. Although we have named these as separate channels of certainty, yet it may easily be seen that they stand by themselves as a class. They apprehend spiritual attributes of being as the five senses apprehend material attributes. They pronounce judgment. It is right, beautiful, good. But this distinction of attributes and conscious judgment is like science and philosophy, a later work. Into it reason as well as the intuitive judgment has entered. But before reason and experience have enabled us thus to analyse and distinguish these intuitive judgments, there is of spiritual as of material things a mingled consciousness giving us conviction of a spiritual world. And as in the material world, the first indistinct impressions of our senses under the law of reason become convictions of definite attributes and of the unity of these in individual objects, so this first indistinct spiritual intuition becomes distinct conviction of definite spiritual attributes, and of the unity of these in "God, the Father Almighty, Maker of all things, Judge of all men." The conviction of spiritual truth or reality is thus perfectly analogous to that of truth received or reality perceived through the senses, and reason as a law of thought enters both the one and the other. There seems no reason for the rejection of the one rather than the other. We may, in

fact, verify the whole field of spiritual certainty by its analogy to that of certainty in material things, as has been done by Butler and Drummond. Still further, as we verify and correct the senses by each other, so also in the spiritual field we must hold our conceptions of right and beauty and goodness in harmonious relation, if we would apprehend exact truth. We have already spoken of reason as the means by which we first distinguish and then verify our intuitive perceptions, both of the material and the spiritual. Reason is that which gives us necessary truth, *the must be.* It calls all our thinking to obey *the must be*; first instinctively, then upon conscious reflection. Among the most unmistakable of these *must-be's* are that which links attribute to essence, and that which demands cause for effect. These are *the must-be's* which instinctively unify our sense impressions of material attributes in convictions of individual objects. Under the same law of reason men instinctively unite their apprehensions of spiritual attribute awakened in the presence of nature and history in the conviction of a personal God. And as the law of cause and effect unfolds our apprehension of the outer world into science, and verifies each element of our knowledge therein, so in the spiritual world the law of cause and effect plays a similar part.

Thus far we have traced our conviction of spiritual realities as mediated by the aid of material things: *i.e.* of facts apprehended by

the senses. We have seen God and the attributes of God only through His works, and in this seeing, reason and spiritual sensibilities have been united. There has been a vision of faith unfolded into distinct intelligence and strong assurance under the law of reason. We may now ask, Is a more direct vision of God possible? something which corresponds more closely to our relation to the physical world? A more immediate spiritual consciousness without the intervention of the material? If this is possible to man, it does not follow that it is a common or universal experience. In all nature it is the elementary or the rudimentary which is universal, the more perfect forms, the complete development is more rare. When Christ says, "Blessed are the pure in heart for they shall see God," or when John writes, "He that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God and God in him," and again, "Our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son," there is evidently reference to a rare and higher form of religious life. So again in the words, "This is eternal life to know Thee the only true God and Jesus Christ whom Thou hast sent." A careful study of the higher forms of religious life to be found in the history of the race will, we think, clearly justify the statement that such have attained to an immediate consciousness of the presence and favour of God, giving a full assurance of faith.

The immediate means of certainty in religion is thus not sense, nor self-consciousness, nor

reason, but faith; at first, it may be, very dimly discerning God in His works and in His doing to the children of men; but rising to higher perfection as we learn of Him from those to whom He has been more perfectly revealed, and finally yielding perfect assurance to those who have received the gift of the Holy Ghost. It is only by the recognition of this capacity in man that we can account for the phenomena of religion as we find them in the history of the race, and to some extent in each person's individual experience.

If it be asserted that in these religious phenomena we have no trustworthy basis of certainty, the reply is that in this matter we at least have certainty, for certainty is a subjective thing, something manifest in consciousness. Unless the whole religious world are hypocrites and liars, they certainly feel confident in their religious faith. If the sincerity of their assurance is admitted, but the claim made that in such assurance they are deceived, then we can but deal with this religious assurance, as we deal with any other assurance, submit it to verification.

First, the test of numbers. One man may be deceived, all cannot be. In the experience of all the ages and nations who have been feeling after God and who have discerned Him, and the best of whom have come to know Him, there must be truth, unless we commit spiritual suicide and conclude that man was made to believe a lie.

Secondly, the test of harmony. The right and the good and the beautiful unite in God. They harmonise with each other. All religion has not been beautiful nor even just and pure. But wherein it has failed of justice and purity and beauty it has fallen short of religion. The perfect ideal of these three is one.

Thirdly, the test of reason. Reason builds with the materials afforded by these spiritual sensibilities as freely and as perfectly as with those furnished by the outward senses, and her most perfect science and philosophy unite the spiritual and the material world. God and the first cause are one.

Lastly, inasmuch as all certainty is founded on reality, as truth is the correspondence of our thought to reality and religious apprehension arises in the presence of outward things, then it may fairly be demanded of religion, that it be built on objective historical facts, and not upon traditional fictions.

The test of religion as true must thus lie:

1. In that it yields a true faith in God, leading to the full assurance of personal communion.

2. That in itself this faith yields the ideal harmony of the holy, the beautiful, and the good.

3. That it is reasonable, the faith of a rational being.

4. That it builds from historic fact.

CHAPTER III

OF RELIGIOUS FAITH AND THE REVELATION OF GOD TO FAITH

WE have just said that true religion, or truth in religion, will approve itself to religious faith. It fits itself to faith as light to the eye. Before we can apply this as a criterion of religious truth we must inquire more fully into the nature of this faith. By faith we designate that act of the human spirit by which we apprehend God as the object of our religious feeling, worship and service. There is included in it our ideas of God and our relation to Him and His will concerning us. But it is the act by which we apprehend these ideas in the spirit of trust, of obedience, and of worship. It is therefore more than a mere idea of God. It is idea or truth passing into emotion, affection and will. It is therefore not a simple, but a very complex spiritual act or state. It includes in the first place the whole trinity of spiritual intuitions. It apprehends God as holy, as good, and as glorious. To this apprehension of God its moral nature yields obedient consent, its affections yield trust and love, and its emotions are those of adoring worship. Faith is thus related to the

moral intuition, to the aesthetic, and to the religious. It fixes them all not upon an abstract idea or principle, but upon a person. In that person it finds its highest ideal of the right, the beautiful, and the good. And this faith in this apprehension of God brings us into His immediate presence, and is thus merged into and perfected by an immediate consciousness of God in and with us.

> "Faith lends its realising light,
> The clouds disperse, the shadows fly;
> The Invisible appears in sight,
> And God is seen by mortal eye."

But it will be seen that in the very origin of this faith there lies an element of cognition, an idea of God. This idea is created by faith in the first instance. In the presence of the outer facts of nature and history, faith first conceives this idea. "That which may be known of God is manifest in them; for God hath shown it unto them. For the invisible things of Him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead" (Rom. i. 19, 20).

But when once these true ideas of God have thus become the possession of the race, and are handed down among men, they have power, on the other hand, to awaken faith. It falls to very few men to find God purely or originally by the light of nature, or even by the aid of the great historic facts of supernatural revelation. Such

original discovery of God and all additions to such discovery in new facts of history have ever been regarded as the result of a special divine gift to chosen men, an inspiration of the Holy Spirit. But once that God has thus been revealed subjectively as well as objectively, the truth thus received becomes a possession of the race. And it of itself, through the same Divine spirit by which it was first given, has power to awaken the activity of faith. All other attributes of God, as well as His righteousness, are "revealed from faith to faith." That is, our knowledge of them springs out of faith and it tends again to beget faith. It is this relation of religious truth to religious faith which forms the basis of our first criterion of religious truth. It springs out of faith, it creates faith, it approves itself to faith as light to the eye.

But it must be borne in mind that this revelation is not apart from the Divine Spirit. If even this revealed truth is severed from its spirit and becomes a cold speculation of reason, it may lose all its power and become profitless to him that hears and to him that speaks. A theology that is without the living spirit has ceased to be theology. It is mere science or philosophy. And being completely out of its sphere, it is but a feeble imitation of these.

We must now turn to the objective side of this religious process. From our receptive side the entrance of the truth is by faith; from the Godward side it is the revelation of Himself to men.

This revelation in itself may be regarded from a personal or from a world-wide point of view. There must be a personal revelation. As God revealed His Son in Paul (Gal. i. 16) so must He do in each of us. If we would have eternal life we must know God and Jesus Christ whom He has sent (John xvii. 3). But this personal revelation of God to me comes through that which is wider and which belongs to the whole race. This wider revelation we are accustomed to speak of as made in God's works of Creation, Providence and Redemption, or in Nature, in human history, and in that supernatural course of events which centred in Jesus Christ—preparing for Him on the one hand and flowing from Him on the other. In so far as any religion is true it must be founded on the whole or on some part of this revelation. This revelation, as a reality, is founded in and is essentially composed of facts. A religion founded on dreams, or upon the fancies of a disordered imagination, or upon the fictions of a cunning deceiver, or upon the pictures of a brilliant poet, could never be regarded as a trustworthy religion. The prophet, through his dream may come to a clearer understanding of the truth, and the poet through his imagination may clothe it in striking literary form; but its foundations must be in the facts which God hath wrought. Of the entire process of the objective revelation of God in historic facts we shall treat hereafter. At this point we emphasise the single element of fact. There is, of

course, a process of facts which are repeated in each individual life, and by which God is specially revealed to me personally. Such are the world around me, the heavenly bodies above me, and the events of my age and of my personal history. Happy is the man who is so influenced as to learn the lessons which these are designed to teach, and who recognises God in all his life. But the great revealing facts are matters of the past and matters of record. And so, when we come to a quest for true religion, the religions built on fiction must be set aside, even though they contain much truth borrowed from God's revealing facts, and our religious faith must build upon that which a rational and critical examination assures us to be real fact. In the inductive search for religious truth the process of historical criticism has, therefore, always had its place. We must test the facts upon which our faith is called to build. Paul himself recognised this when he said, "If Christ be not risen, then is our preaching in vain, and your faith is also vain" (1 Cor. xv. 14). The evidence and attestation of the facts upon which a true religion is built must be reasonably sufficient.

In dealing, therefore, with religious truth, next to the religious faith by which it is first apprehended as true, stands the historic reality of the facts upon which it is based. The facts constitute the objective revelation of God. The interpretation of those facts under the influence of the Holy Spirit gives us the recorded revelation. Into that

record there may be woven allegory, parable, poetry or any other form of literary presentation which may serve to make the interpretation and presentation of truth more clear or more vivid to our apprehension. All these may be instruments employed by the revealing and interpreting spirit. It is, therefore, no discredit to a religion that it is presented in poetic imagery or in allegoric or parabolic form, or even woven into myth and folk-lore, provided this is not the foundation of the religious idea, but only a literary form of presentation. The extent to which our Lord used such forms is well known; His reason is also clearly given. It was because only thus could they grasp and carry away with them truth which they could not yet understand (Matt. xiii. 10, etc.).

The demand, therefore, for historical reality in sacred books is well founded. But if it is carried to the extent of pure literalism in all presentation, and to the exclusion of all poetical and tropical presentation, such demand may lead us to the most erroneous conclusions and to the most extravagant positions. It will inevitably lead to direct conflict of critical history with the Sacred Books.

The same principle also applies to scientific presentations of nature. The great nature facts lie at the basis of all religions, as they do at the basis of all forms of science. But in stating those facts as the basis of religious conceptions, it is not necessary that any religion should present us with an absolute science. Each age must natur-

ally use the language of its own scientific conceptions. The facts do not change, and in those facts all scientific conceptions, from the crudest primitive cosmogony to the most advanced modern scientific theory, will find a certain relation; and with the change in the scientific conception of fact will come changes in the presentation of the religious idea founded in that fact. But the fundamental conception is the same, and child and mature man, savage and philosopher, may unite in thinking of God as the "Maker of all things."

Quite distinct from these investigations of true religious *faith* and fundamental historic *fact* is the question of harmony between the moral, æsthetic and religious intuitions, and their unity in a complete faith, and their further harmony with the necessary truths of reason. This last process in theology will tend, not merely to the verification or confirmation of faith, but also to its purification and its perfection. The process of degeneration in religious faith has, in all ages, been an easy one. So is it with all the highest forms even of material life; so also with the more complex organisations of our social and political life; so is it with even our intellectual forms of life. While a law of progress runs through the whole, it is through death to new and higher life. It does not, therefore, condemn religious faith that we find it, like the other highest things in the finite and, therefore, progressive universe, subject to decay. An important province of theology is

thus the purification of the popular religious faith, the separation from it of the accretions of error and superstition which are continually attaching themselves to the religious faith of all peoples. In an age of historical criticism there is little danger of the intrusion of invented facts. Spiritualism and Christian science may make the attempt, but with scarce even a transient success. In an age of evangelism and missions, living religious faith is doubtless making rapid progress among men. But it is needful to see that this living faith is pure and perfect; that it includes the holiness, the right reason, and the beauty of the Divine character as well as His goodness. A one-sided faith soon passes into positive error, and very easily adds its own fancies and inferences to God's foundations. In the process of verification of religious truths, and especially under this law of verification through harmony of the true, the right, the beautiful and the good, it is the office of theology to seek for the pure and perfect truth on every side.

Our tests or criteria of religious truth as given by faith in the revelation of God may thus be reduced to a threefold classification:

1. It maintains a living religious faith.
2. It is founded in fact.
3. It presents the harmony of the true, the beautiful, the right and the good.

CHAPTER IV

SCHOOLS OR TYPES OF THEOLOGY

IN the history of Theology, as founded on religious faith, we find that the complex nature of a perfect religious faith has not always been recognised. Apart altogether from considerations which hereafter appear of the ruin of man's spiritual nature, and hence of the positive corruption of his religious life, the limitations and infirmities of our intellectual constitution give rise to imperfections in our theology. We easily fail to preserve the perfect balance of truth, or to attain, by means of that balance, to purity of faith. As example of this we have—

1. A rationalistic type of theology. This seeks to build our conception of God upon the basis of the necessary truth afforded by pure reason. Reason demands a cause, and God is posited as the First Cause of the universe. When to this conception of God is added evolution as the expression of the relation of all that is, ourselves included, to this cause, we have materialism, or pantheism, according as the first cause is apprehended as universal matter or as spirit. Even short of pantheism we may have a rationalistic

theology, which makes reason the larger element in our apprehension of God through faith. While the religious faith of a rational being cannot be irrational or contradictory to reason, and while reason thus becomes the purifier of faith by the elimination of all irrational conceptions, we must always bear in mind that, as in philosophy, reason is first, and the facts furnished by the senses or by the moral or religious intuitions are the occasion, and serve only to give direction; so in religion the intuitive elements of faith, especially the religious intuition, is first, and reason is but a guide to discriminate the true from the false in the conceptions which they furnish. Any type or school of theology which neglects this, and makes reason the source from which, in whole or in part, we draw our religious conceptions, may fairly be designated as rationalistic. There is peculiar danger of falling into this error in our day, when the element of cognition is separated from the moral and religious and aesthetic intuition, and the term reason is made to cover the whole ground of direct cognition of truth, moral and religious, as well as purely rational. The rational idea of first cause is in harmony with the religious idea of God, but must not be substituted for it. It may, indeed, help us to enlarge and perfect our religious idea; but rather, like the objective facts of nature, as the material upon which religious faith works than as a substitute for that faith. The same holds true in the finite field of science as in the universal field of philosophy.

2. A second one-sided type of Theology is the mystic. This is directly the opposite of the last. It exalts the religious intuition to the exclusion of reason, and with reason, generally the aesthetic intuition, and sometimes even to the detriment of the moral. The result is an intense faith—always narrow, generally burdened or overlaid with many superstitions, often irrational, and quite ready to oppose itself to both philosophy and science. It fails to recognise the legitimate demands of reason or its necessary presence in all forms of our spiritual activity. Its rejection of the authority of moral law is happily less frequent, though occasionally it proceeds even to this extreme. This mysticism in faith and theology becomes in religious life enthusiasm or fanaticism, and has given rise to the most serious practical consequences as well as to most dangerous errors. Here, as in other cases, the old adage holds good—the perversion of the best is the worst. This very form of spiritual activity which, when unbalanced by reason and conscience, leads into such serious error, is nevertheless the central element of all true religious faith; but it is so only in conjunction with the true, the beautiful, and the right. In the unity and harmony of these it grasps the highest of all truth and reality—God. Separate from these it is a blind feeling after God, sometimes imperfectly finding Him, often mistaking its own imaginations for Him.

3. A third type or school of Theology, opposed to both these, is that which builds upon authority.

This immediately divides into two: the school of ecclesiastical authority and that of supernatural authority. These, therefore, constitute not No. 3, but Nos. 3 and 4.

It will be seen at once that the relation of authority to our faith is not subjective and internal, but objective and external. In other words, authority is not an element of faith in itself or a capacity called into exercise when we believe, but an external power with real or supposed fitness to produce faith or an occasion upon which faith should be exercised. It is something outside of ourselves with a right to prescribe the substance of our faith. When we examine it more closely we find that this authority presents to us a form or rule of faith either in the creed of the Church (ecclesiastical authority), or in the teaching of men whose faith has been supernaturally directed (inspired men), or (the highest of all) of One who was Himself supernatural or, as He himself declared, one with God. The point of relation of these to subjective faith is the substance of that faith or our idea of God. And the very idea of authority is that there is an objective as well as a subjective verification of our faith. We can test our faith as true or false, not only on the basis of reason, and of conscience, and of personal religious conviction, but also on that of its agreement with the faith of the Church and of its agreement with that of apostles, prophets, or the Christ. This certainly is a proper verification. If I

doubt or distrust my eye-sight it is reasonable and wise to compare it with that of those who stand around me, or with that of one whose vision is known to be unusually perfect. Nay, more, such a verification is not only reasonable, but it is the only means by which we can reach the highest perfection of truth. The personal equation must effect all men in subjective verification. For perfect truth we must have a wider induction than that which is afforded by our own subjective experience. And such a wider induction we gain when, by a slow process of crystallization, the conceptions of successive generations of religious men form into a defined doctrine, and such doctrine is accepted and ordained as the creed of the Church. But while recognising that the result thus attained represents the most perfect human form of religious idea as truth, it must be borne in mind that its perfection is not absolute, but relative and progressive. History shows very clearly that the progress of doctrine is very slow, and that for the perfect development of a new form many generations of individual men are needed, and that when they finally culminate in new and more perfect creed forms they do so through great conflict. But with the exception of these crucial periods creed forms, when once established, possess a relative stability. But after all, their degree of authority is exactly measured by their truth. Their promulgation by ecclesiastical authority recommends them; it creates a pro-

bability in their favour; it gives them right of way, so to speak; it puts them in acknowledged possession of all the didactic agencies of the Church; but it does not place them above the final criteria of all truth. All honest men must test that which they are asked to accept as truth. Still further, ecclesiastical authority cannot produce a living faith; truth alone applied by the Spirit can do this. It is impossible to impose dogma by mere authority; authority may create a dead acquiescence, it cannot create a living faith. That is the province of truth alone. The creed is worthless and powerless unless it is the expression of the living faith of living men; and it becomes such living faith, not as creed or by force of authority, but as simple truth. True theology thus never reaches its proper foundation until it has sought out the ultimate tests of truth. To build its system upon creed, fathers, councils, or ecclesiastical decisions, is to build on the surface instead of digging down to living rock. Ecclesiastical authority may thus be a safe guide, but it can never be either a final or a safe foundation for our theology. If the object of theology is the exhibition of the contents of religious faith as a perfect body of truth, it can never rest satisfied with any prescription of the past, however excellent. It will always give these due weight and consideration. But each generation must, for itself, "prove all things and hold fast that which is good." Any other course leads not

only to stagnation and decadence in theology, but still further to the extinction of religious life and the conversion of faith into mere formal assent. A living theology and a living faith go hand-in-hand.

It would be altogether extravagant to apply these conclusions indiscriminately to the other form of authority—that of the supernatural. While they have important relations, the two are not necessarily connected. The Reformation was a revolt from a certain form of ecclesiastical authority, as well as a new resurrection to life from the spiritual death which followed the abuse of that authority; but while it rejected the authority of the Church, it held all the more tenaciously to the supernatural authority of the written word. Side by side with the right of private judgment it placed the authority of Scripture. This authority it proceeded to establish on the basis of the attestation of miracle and prophecy, and a mechanical or verbal theory of inspiration. The whole question of the office of the supernatural in religion and in revelation will be considered hereafter. We are dealing here only with its relation to the office and method of true theology. True theology is founded in living religious faith, and its office is the verification and purification of that faith; but living faith can no more be produced by the authority of a miracle than by the authority of the Church. Faith is not to be imposed by any constraint from without. Truth, and truth alone,

can call it forth. The great religious teachers, both of the Old Testament and of the New, recognise this, and warn us to try every man's work as a religious teacher whether it be of God. They warn us against lying signs and wonders (Deut. xiii. 1-3; Matt. xxiv. 24; 2 Thess. ii. 9-12). They thus clearly call upon us to test even the teaching which is enforced by the authority of miracle and prophecy, by the moral and religious character of the doctrine. If it is a doctrine of either unrighteousness or ungodliness it must be rejected. Not even a miracle can force either reason or faith to accept with living conviction of truth that which contradicts reason or our moral and religious intuitions. Reason and our moral and religious nature may be so confused by an apparent miracle that we may weakly yield assent to and obey a lie; but neither a true nor a false miracle can produce that living faith which takes hold of truth, and truth alone. The formal method of establishing the authority of Scripture which has prevailed in the last three hundred years is thus out of harmony with Scripture itself, as well as inconsistent with the true nature of living faith.

But we would do great injustice to the office and authority of Scripture if we supposed that because the feeble supports by which men have sought to prop it up are found to be useless, therefore all foundation of its authority was gone. Its true authority is based upon its power to create living faith. Whether as a spoken or a

written word, it comes to us "in demonstration of the Spirit and of power." We shall see hereafter how that power is enhanced by the presence of the supernatural; but to substitute the presence of the supernatural for the demonstration of the spirit within would be not to verify religious faith, but to destroy it by substituting an outward assent to a syllogism for the consent of our deepest spiritual being to the truth of God. The wise theologian will thus hold fast by the Word of God as an authoritative guide; but he will receive its teaching as a living faith in his own soul. He will use it as a fountain of water of life, from which he may drink, as the source and creator of his living faith rather than as the mere textual test-book by which it is to be verified. He cannot long study the Scriptures without recognising that they represent *a perfect religious faith*, such as is to be found nowhere else. He will learn also that, in some cases, as in Paul and John, religious faith had already begun to construct a theology, so that here and there the theology of the New Testament does furnish a standard for our theology; but he will learn as well that the vast majority of our modern theological questions were never raised in New Testament times nor by New Testament writers, and that what we call New Testament theology is in part at least our theology, founded more or less perfectly on the New Testament. The Scriptures are really the record of a religious life, founded on supernatural facts and created by supernatural,

spiritual influence. This religious life includes the ideas of religious faith as well as its affections and practical duties. There is in it only the beginning of theology that is of the reflective definition and collation of those ideas in a rational system. To use it as if it were a collection of theological commonplaces is entirely to mistake its true character. Scripture is the standard of our living faith. Here it is supreme. It thus gives us the elementary material of theology. It gives us this not as an abstract intellectual idea, but as a living faith in our hearts. It is this living faith which comes forth as theology under the guidance of reason. And when we bring this theology to the test for verification we can only do so through our moral and religious intuition. These must make theology a living conception on the one hand, and *interpret* Scripture, *i.e.* convert it into living conception on the other; and, by the aid of reason, discern their unity or divergence. The authority of Scripture does not thus override reason, or the moral or religious intuitions, but enters into unity of life with them. And any type or school of theology which builds upon the supernatural authority of Scripture in such a way as to place it in antagonism to reason and to moral or religious intuition must so far fail to arrive at perfect truth.

The true theology will thus be at once rational, intuitional, and scriptural. It will also give a respectful, though not slavish, deference to the admonitions of history. A failure to accord with

all these will ever be to it a note of warning. Contradiction of either of the first three will be to it a proof of certain error.

But in building its system of positive religious truth, it will build directly from its own vigorous living faith. It will carefully feed this faith upon the Word of God. And the elements of truth which grow out of this living process it will bring back again to the test, not only of the Word, but of reason and conscience. This may seem, indeed, to involve an impossible labour; but the defined truth so won will abide the test of the ages, and will build and perfect the spiritual life of the world.

CHAPTER V

OUTLINE OF SYSTEM

HAVING thus defined our subject, our logical method, our tests of truth and the generic form of our work, we may now proceed to outline the order in which we shall pursue our investigation of theological truth.

1. We shall apply our tests of truth in religion for the purpose of determining the historic form in which true religion, and with it religious truth, exists among men.

2. We shall study the revelation of this truth and its preservation among men. This will give us the Doctrine of the Word.

3. We shall study the contents of religious truth in the following order:

1. God.
2. The world as related to God.
3. Man as naturally related to God.
4. Sin.
5. Redemption, including—
   (*a*) The nature, office and work of Christ as Redeemer.
   (*b*) The office and work of the Holy Spirit.

6. Personal salvation, including—
   (*a*) The new probation.
   (*b*) The estate of salvation.
   (*c*) Christian ethics.
   (*d*) Christian perfection.
7. The office and agencies of the Christian Church.
8. The kingdom of Christ.
9. The consummation.

PART I

THE INVESTIGATION OF TRUE RELIGION IN HISTORIC FORM

CHAPTER I

PRELIMINARY

THEOLOGY begins with religion as an existing historic fact. It also assumes the validity of the certainty which we reach through moral and religious intuition, as the sciences of nature assume the validity of the certainty reached through the senses. It therefore takes for granted that there is truth in religion. Its first business is to find that truth, its second is to present it in rational form and verification.

Inasmuch as our ideas of God and our relations to Him arise in the presence of certain objective facts, if these ideas represent truth, the facts may be regarded as a revelation of God, or at least as the means of such revelation. Theology, therefore, in assuming the existence of religious truth assumes the existence of a revelation of God. The truth can be most perfectly found in its revelation; and the quest for religious truth and

for true religion as the system which most perfectly possesses religious truth becomes the quest for the complete revelation of God, so far as that has been made in actual fact to man. If we are to conduct this quest by the inductive method, we are led at once into the field of historic religions and religious history. We can find the actual revelation of God only at the basis of a real existent religion or religions. And we can find the actual religious truth which exists among men only in the same field. Our first business is a survey of the existing religion or religions of the world, with a view to the discovery in them of true religion and religious truth.

Immediately that we address ourselves to this task we find that there are two possible methods before us. As there are a large number of religious systems in the world to-day and in past ages, we may adopt toward these either the eclectic or the comparative method. Following the eclectic method we may endeavour to gather from all systems whatever each may be able to yield of tested religious truth, and out of this construct our system. Following the comparative method we may place the existing historic systems side by side, and applying to them our tests of religious truth, endeavour to determine which most perfectly represents true religion and the most perfect revelation of God to man. This latter method we choose for the following reasons: (1) Eclectic systems are artificial, are lacking in unity, and hence are unsatisfactory and not permanent. This

is the case even in science and philosophy, although these are confined to the small number of men who attain to the higher intellectual life, and hence are better fitted to appreciate a judiciously constructed eclectic system. Religion, on the other hand, to obtain historic influence must command the faith of the great body of the people and so must grow up into their life. It may assimilate external elements, and it may even come to a people from without, but it must do so as a living spiritual power appealing to religious faith and conscience. It can never be imposed or even constructed by an artificial, intellectual process of eclecticism. An eclectic theology would not represent any living form of religion, and would so cease to be theology, and become a mere religious science or philosophy.

2. It is of the very nature of religion that it rejects eclecticism. All historic religions have been perpetuated either by the power of a living faith or by the help of traditional teaching. A living faith must find God directly in his revelation of Himself to the soul. It cannot build on the mere acceptance of the beliefs of others. Much less can it build by a selection of fragments of various religious faiths of the past. These can at best but serve to direct it to the fountain-head of light and truth. On the other hand, a traditional faith would cease to be traditional by becoming eclectic. The entire force of tradition lies in the sentiment of reverence for our fathers, and eclecticism implies an intellectual interest, which has already displaced that

sentiment, and is already seeking ways and means for new and better things. Hence it is not surprising that religious faith in either form is exclusive and asserts itself as a finality. Living faith in the common mind asserts itself with such power in the region of our deepest emotions that it is impatient of any intellectual questioning of its sacred things. And a dead traditional faith is equally intolerant of any interference with its quiescent and reverent acceptance of the teaching of the past. All nations have thus held to a faith in a true religion rather than to faith in individual elements of religious truth to be pieced together as each man may be able. It has thus been believed among all peoples that God has made a revelation of Himself and of His will to men; and that men, chosen and endowed of God, have been raised up to expound this revelation to their fellow-men, and that upon these apostles and prophets we must build as our foundation. In the field of religion it is spiritual death and not intellectual imperfection which results in final overthrow of a religious system. And when a new system comes forward, it is the work of a new spiritual life and not of a merely intellectual interest. This new life does indeed take up into itself the truth of the past, and adds to it new elements drawn directly from revelation. But it does so, not by methods of intellectual criticism and induction, but by the power of an inward living faith, which expands itself into a perfect body of truth by its own living

vision of God. Eclecticism is thus alien from the religious spirit in which alone theology can be properly studied.

3. While these reasons lead us to reject the eclectic method, we shall find, on the other hand, that the comparative method leads us directly to an existent religion, which stands pre-eminent above all others. Just as in science, the fruitfulness of a method is its justification; so here, if the comparison of existing religions leads us at once to one which is not only the best existing, but also includes all truth to be found in any other, then there is nothing for the eclectic method to do. It can find nothing elsewhere to add to the sum of the truth already embodied in an existing living faith. On the other hand, the comparative method not only leads us to this highest existing faith, but also affirms important elements of that faith by the assent of other religions. It brings the truth which all contain to attest the important elements of this highest and best of religions. If in Confucianism and Buddhism we find important elements of moral truth, that fact attests such truth by the added assent of one-third the race, and so far affirms the truth of every other religion which embodies the same truth.

4. While this comparative method cannot demonstrate an absolute religion, or the absence from the best existing religion of any element of error or imperfection, it places us in the best position to give proper weight and consideration to the supernatural facts which may be adduced

to give our faith in this religion a still more exclusive character.

Turning then to the comparative study of religions in our quest for the foundation of a true theology, we may avail ourselves of all the scientific work which has been accomplished in this field. This will make it unnecessary for us to trace the origin or analyse the contents of each individual religion. The science of Comparative Religion has already examined for us the whole field, and has reduced the existing religions to such an orderly classification as will suit our purpose. The central characteristic of any religion as such is its conception of God. Even in our Christian world each man's religion may be measured by his idea of God. When the world's great religions are grouped according to this element we shall be able at once to deal with them as classes, for no religion which is founded on an erroneous conception of God can be in itself true; and the place of each religion in the ascending scale of perfection may be accurately determined by the same test.

On this basis we may classify the religions of history as follows:

1. Nature Religions, including the primitive religions generally.

2. Polytheism. This class includes such religions as those of ancient Egypt, Assyria, Babylon, Greece, Rome and the northern nations of Europe. Many of these are associated with a pantheistic tendency in their philosophy.

3. Pantheistic; emerging from polytheism and intermingling philosophy with religion. Such we have in Hinduism or Brahmanism. A strong tendency in the same direction appears in the later esoteric teaching of the Greeks.

4. Dualistic; Magdaism.

5. Ethical and humanistic; which may be regarded as attempts at reformation rather than as original religions. Among these we may class Buddhism, Confucianism and Taoism.

6. Monotheistic religions; Mohammedanism, Mosaism and Christianity.

Every known form of historical religion can easily find its place in this classification, and will suffer no injustice by being ranked and judged with its class.

In forming an estimate of the truth or falsity of these religions we shall inquire as to each class:

1. Has it created and maintained among men a definite religious faith? and does that religious faith now satisfy the religious intuitions of humanity?

2. Has this faith been founded on actual facts in nature and history? and do these facts constitute an historic revelation of God to man?

3. Is the faith so founded and created in harmony with our moral, aesthetic and rational convictions, and so verified to us as reasonable creatures?

If, in answer to these questions, we find a religion actually existent among men, with power to perpetuate a living religious faith, a religion

founded upon the common facts of nature and upon assured facts of history, and a religion in harmony with the conscience, the sense of beauty and propriety and the reason of mankind, then certainly such a religion will have established a strong claim upon our acceptance as true. If further, upon examination, this religion is found to have arisen by an historic process, which has enabled it to take up into itself all religious truth which can be found in any other, and to add to this the highest conceptions of God as yet attained by man, then certainly such religion by this very fact establishes its pre-eminence.

Further, this pre-eminence may rise to the height of exclusive authority, if such religion can be shown to be the outcome of a line of historic unfolding, bearing the clearest marks of a special presence and working of God, who therein reveals Himself to men; and that such revelation, while mediated by a special people and by chosen agents, has been prepared for the whole human race.

It will be seen that this entire view of the authority of religion to command our faith is based, not upon reason, nor yet upon syllogistic demonstration. It builds from our religious intuitions. It speaks to us words which appeal to our hearts as from God. Just as true moral teaching appeals to conscience, so this, to borrow the expression of Coleridge, finds me. The fatherhood of God revealed in Jesus Christ forgiving iniquity, transgression, and sin, satisfies my deepest spiritual need; and when once it has been spoken

to me, my whole being accepts it and delights in it as God's own truth. It is a "joy unspeakable and very full of glory." This is the true direct universal demonstration of religion to men. It is in and of itself a perfect satisfaction, an inward witness of truth to the soul, the "demonstration of the Spirit." All else is reflective verification, useful in its own place, but not first or chief. Next to this demonstration of religious truth to our faith comes its foundation in reality. A religious faith founded on fictions is superstition. Superstition is nothing more or less than the religious emotions and ideas aroused within us by invented or imaginary representations. This has been the fertile field of priestcraft in all the ages. The historical criticism of the facts or records upon which a great religious system is built is thus as fundamental as the power of those facts to awaken our religious feeling and to satisfy our religious conviction.

The third line of harmonics will complete both the verification and purification of our religious faith. History will show us that there have been accretions to all religions, if not in their sacred records at least in their popular forms of teaching. Historical criticism and comparison with our sense of right, our sense of fitness, and our reason will do much to eliminate these.

Finally, in this investigation of religion as true, we must deal with it in its most perfect form, but yet not as a mere literary ideal, but as a living faith in the hearts of living men.

CHAPTER II

HISTORIC RELIGIONS

1. *Nature Religion*

THE original forms of nature religion are no longer known as historical systems. All existing religions and all ancient religions of which record remains have already passed through a process of development. The lowest existing form of nature religion fetichism is evidently a decadence, in which religion, moral sense, and intellect have all suffered in common with the physical nature. Among tribes who have become abnormally feeble in body and mind, the religious instinct is little more than a blind dread of the great forces of nature by which they find themselves crushed.

A much nearer approach to a pure nature religion may be seen in the earlier religious life of India, described by Prof. Max Müller as Kathenotheism. The most ancient Vedic hymns which are at once the surviving record and embodiment of this religious spirit recognise and worship the Divine power in the various objects of nature, the sun, the sky, the rain clouds, the earth, the sea. But even here we find that inter-

mingling play of the imagination which subsequently culminated in mythological polytheism. Says Prof. Max Müller, in speaking of the objects of Vedic worship, "They are all still oscillating between what is seen by the senses, what is created by the fancy, and what is postulated by the understanding." "Monotheistic in the usual sense of that word it (the Vedic religion) is decidedly not, though there are hymns that assert the unity of the Divine as fearlessly as any passage of the Old Testament." After quoting a number of these, he goes on to say, "But by the side of such passages, which are few in number, there are thousands in which ever so many divine beings are praised and prayed to." Again, a very useful division of the Vedic gods has been made by Yaska into terrestrial, aerial, and celestial; and if the old Hindu theologian meant no more than that all the manifestations of divine power in nature might be traced back to three centres of force, one in the sky, one in the air, and one on the earth, he deserves great credit for his sagacity. But he himself perceived evidently that this generalisation was not quite applicable to all the gods, and he goes on to say, "Or, it may be, these gods are all distinct beings, for the praises addressed to them are distinct, and their appellations also." From this presentation of this very ancient religion, which lay on the border between nature religion and a definite and developed polytheism, we may perhaps learn something of the value of nature religion.

1. It is founded upon the manifestation of the Divine in nature, more especially divine power, wisdom, and goodness.

2. It implies the exercise of our religious capacity or faith toward these manifestations.

3. It is thus founded on fact, and involves a truly religious feeling.

4. But in itself it has served only as a foundation for the development of religious life, and as such has either been completed by more perfect revelation of God through the moral nature and in harmony with the higher reason, or it has passed into the next form of historic religion.

2. *Polytheistic Religions.*

These introduce us fully into the region of religious history. In various forms they prevailed in India, China, and Japan, until in part replaced by Buddhism and the Confucian philosophy. They constituted the religions of the great empires of the Euphrates Valley, and of Syria, Egypt, Greece and Rome. They prevailed in Central and Northern Europe, and quite recently in Central America and the Pacific Islands. We have thus abundant examples of this form of religious life both in ancient and modern times. If we examine any one of these, we shall find the following general facts:

1. They are founded on nature religion, and so contain some measure of religious truth.

2. In their earlier history they maintain some strength of religious faith, and even some degree

of moral influence, in so far as the influence of the moral nature has been felt in their development.

3. But in their development we find an increasing element of error due—first, to the play of the imagination in giving them form; secondly, to the decline of an earnest, moral, and religious spirit; and thirdly, to the power of the human passions.

4. The result is that they become irrational, immoral, and irreligious. The course of their degeneracy is described with remarkable accuracy by St Paul in Rom. i. 19-32.

In many of these religions we find embodied important elements of moral and religious truth. They represent not only faith in a higher power, but also ideas of providence, moral government, justice, and a final judgment, with a future life connected by moral sequence with the present. The universal rite of sacrifice also implies some notion of propitiation and the forgiveness of sins. Such elements of religious truth, so long as they were held with a firm faith, influencing practical life, constituted a powerful influence for good in moulding the lives of these nations. But notwithstanding this, we find in every case a final collapse both in morals and religion. The cause of this collapse lies not in the inherent nature of religion, nor in its relation to morality, but in the method of its development, and in the consequent deterioration of the religious principle itself. The first and most obvious element in this deterioration was the division of religious faith among many objects. The

object of true religious faith must be personal. The words of St John, "We love Him because He first loved us," reveal to us the deeper nature of religion. It is not a mere faith in an unseen power, but a religious affection towards that power. Such affection in its very nature is reciprocal. To command our love, God must love us. Thus only a person can be the object of religious affection. And when, through the play of the imagination and the confusion of religious faith, gods are multiplied, each becomes a distinct personality. These separate personalities are consequently local and limited. The object of worship is no longer the eternal, the all-sufficient God. The confidence and affection inspired by such a being is correspondingly enfeebled, and religion dwindles down to the level of the human affections and passions. The step from this is very easy to ascribe to these gods the corrupt passions of humanity, and to create for them through the myth-forming fancy a fictitious history of the most absurd and even degraded character. When this stage is reached the collapse of the entire religious system, and with it of practical morality, is not far removed.

One of the most interesting features in the evolution of polytheism is the part played by the myth. The prominence of the myth in the polytheistic religions has in fact created an unjust prejudice against this primitive form of human thought. All nations have expressed their first ideas of science, philosophy and re-

ligion in the form of myth. The psychological basis of this form of thought differs but little from that which underlies the parable, the allegory and the metaphor, and the great body of our modern fiction and poetry. They all call in the aid of the imagination in the formation and expression of spiritual ideas. This form of mental activity always gives peculiar pleasure, and every child passes through a stage of mental development in which this seems his most natural mode of thought. Its danger lies in departure from reality, and hence from truth, by the substitution of these creatures of the imagination for actual facts. The creations of the imagination becoming thus not the adornment, but the very foundation of the science, the philosophy or the religion, the entire structure becomes unreal. The myth resembles in this respect the modern scientific hypothesis, which is a merely tentative method of presenting scientific facts. If the hypothesis is substituted for fact the science soon runs far astray. The collapse of all the ancient polytheistic religions was so complete, and the lesson of their history so obvious, that no one would look to them now as at all worthy of consideration by the seeker of true religion. Their congeners which have survived to our own day in no way differ from them. They have one and all lost the power of true religious life, have become immoral in their influence, have degenerated into physical and spiritual deformity,

have become utterly irrational, and have finally substituted fiction for fact, and lies for truth.

3. *The Great Sects.*

The failure of polytheistic religions has given rise at various times to great reformations. These have been distinguished in a very marked way from the polytheistic religions both in their origin and method of growth. Polytheism has generally taken the form of a national religion, gradually unfolding with the laws, literature and civilization of each people. The relation of these religions to each other corresponds very closely to the ethnic affinities of the peoples; and ethnology, comparative philology, and comparative religions or mythology are very closely related. They are all the outcome of the forces which mould the history of a nation. On the other hand the great sects have arisen at once under the teaching and leadership of some master-mind, who has devoted himself to remedy existing evils. Zoroaster, Gautama, Confucius, Lao Tze were such teachers and leaders. It is quite true that in every case the times were ripe for the movement of which they took the lead, and that its fundamental principle was already fore-ordered by the crying needs of the times. But, granting this, the directing power of a great personality appears as a most prominent factor; and each system has received both name and form from a founder. The systems which thus in ancient times attempted to meet the want created by the decay and cor-

ruption of religion were Mazdaism in Persia, Buddhism in India, Confucianism in China, and Taouism also in China.

These systems all arose in the midst of a decadent, corrupt, and idolatrous polytheism. They were intended to meet, sometimes the religious, sometimes the moral, and sometimes the political want created by the failure of the old moral forces. Their attitude toward the old religions varied from utter rejection to easy toleration or incorporation as useful for the common people. But they all agree in this, that the old polytheistic mythology and idolatry forms no essential part of the new system. It is either discarded, opposed, ignored, or at most allowed to continue as a useful means to the end which they propose. This last applies more especially to the Chinese systems, which were rather political philosophies and politics than moral and religious systems.

The systems took form in the mature thought and deep personal experience of the founders. In each case they reflect the philosophy which they adopted. Zoroaster was a dualist finding the solution of the problem of evil and of man's moral history in the conflict of two great forces in the Universe, the spirit of good and that of evil. Gautama built upon the pantheism of the old Hindu religion. As a result, while the one retained the religious spirit and worship, the other retained only the spirit of reverence in the presence of the great problem of existence.

The four systems are ethical, but each with a distinct idea of the central idea in ethics. The ethical motive of Zoroaster was conflict with evil, and virtue thus lies in strong will. With Gautama desire was the fountain of evil, and renunciation of all desire becomes the way of righteousness. With Lao Tze, the natural method, the order of nature, the reasonable course is that to be followed. With Confucius the supremacy of duty, the obligation of every relation and of each particular station is to give law to our life. These central ideas are all ethical, and seem to reveal the fact that the failure of the old systems of which they were most sensible was a moral failure. They but very imperfectly express the truly religious hunger of the heart for a rock of eternal truth and right, of infinite strength and love upon which we may rest; though they are not entirely without a feeling after this element also.

The systems thus constructed have had a history of about two thousand five hundred years, that of Zoroaster several centuries longer. Buddhism influences one-third of the race and Confucianism about one-fourth. The other two are confined to much narrower limits. This persistence through time and this wide extension of influence over so large a part of the race entitle them to careful consideration. Following our inductive method we can only submit them to the tests proposed for true religion, and seek the answer to those tests in the facts of their history. It must be borne in mind that in this review we pass no

judgment upon their merits as ethical systems. We are testing them solely from the side of religious truth and of their power to meet the religious needs of humanity. If we find them also failing to produce the highest moral results, it may prove that they are fundamentally defective in ethics as in religion, or that ethics and religion cannot be separated from each other, and that failure in religious faith means failure of moral influence and a resulting "moral interregnum."

1. Our first question then is, Have any or all of these systems resulted in the establishment and maintenance of genuine religious faith? This could be done either by purifying and revivifying the old faith, where the old religious forms and beliefs were continued, or by creating a new religious faith in the hearts of the people, where the old faith was replaced. In the case of Mazdaism we know so little of its remote history that very definite and certain statement of fact is impossible; but it is perhaps probable that the new teaching was accompanied with an awakening of not only moral but also religious earnestness. The character of the teaching indicates that there had been awakened a deep moral consciousness similar to that described by St Paul in the seventh chapter of Romans, and that this moral consciousness was associated with faith in a Higher Power and a sense of responsibility thereto. Man in his moral struggle was linked to unseen beings, between whom a similar conflict was waged for the final dominion of the Universe.

The religious side of moral life was further carried into a future life; and what is still more important was associated with purification of the thoughts by the aid of the Good power of the Universe. It cannot be denied that the moral results of this religion on the lives of its little band of professed followers are such as to command high praise; and its moral teachings approach more nearly to the standard of the New Testament than those of any other system extant. But while it thus proves its power to produce and maintain through long ages an effective religious faith, and while it has suffered less than any other religion of the same antiquity from the two great causes of decay, superstition and immorality, if we except Judaism, it has, like Judaism, lacked in expansive power. Its religious faith has lacked the vigour and enthusiasm which can go forth to conquer the world. It is now, and has always been, the religion of a small number confined to a limited territory.

The answer to the first question in regard to Buddhism may be much more concise. It is scarcely possible to describe the earliest and purest form of Buddhism as a religious faith. With regard to God or any conception of the unseen and Divine power it is silent. It resembles religion in its most spiritual form in that it deals with the facts of man's inner consciousness and with the great facts of human life, suffering, sorrow, and death. But it deals with these in themselves and in the human relation to

them, and not as entering into our relation to God, or to any unseen being, unless it be in its doctrine of transmigration. The end which it seeks is relief from sorrow and pain, and the way to that end lies through an ethical rather than a religious mysticism. The outward manifestation of this is in an ethical rule of life rather than in forms of religious worship. It is thus impossible to say that it ever established a living religious faith. The inner exercises of Gautama bear a striking resemblance to those of a seeker after God. But they reveal sin as misery rather than as exposed to Divine judgment, and his final escape from it is by the illumination of ethical truth rather than by revelation of the mercy of God. It thus appears almost as a parody of experimental Christianity. It renounces sin and self but to escape from sorrow, not to seek God. It casts out the desire of the world from the heart, but not to fill the heart with Divine love. To one or two of the earliest mystics it seemed to bring the desired rest. But to the vast multitude to whom it was most earnestly proclaimed, it held out an alluring promise which attracted millions of followers in many lands. But almost universally failing to bring them even to the peace of ethical, mystic enlightenment, it returned to the old ways of polytheism, made Buddha a god, and developed a mythology of Buddhas which once more became a fanciful superstition and a round of empty forms.

The work of Lao Tze was largely analogous to

that of Gautama, with less moral depth; and it underwent the same transformation into a superstition probably largely moulded by contact with decadent Buddhism. On the other hand, the work of Confucius was of a more practical character, and without any element even of ethical mysticism. He was a practical teacher of the principles of right living. We do not find either in his life or teaching any evidence of the mystic, moral struggle. He takes it for granted that the right life is practical and practicable. He includes in that right life the ancient religion, but it does not appear that he infused into it any new life either moral or religious. It can scarcely be pretended that his system either created or maintained any new religious life or true faith in God.

Of all these remarkable attempts at reformation in the ancient Asiatic world, it thus must be said that as religions they failed, and certainly no person to-day seeking for right living relation to God would turn to anyone of them for the light of a true religious life.

2. It is scarcely necessary to apply to them our second test, are they founded on facts revealing God to man? They all deal with the moral facts of human nature, both those which appear in external history, and those which are felt in the inner experience of the human heart. But they have interpreted these so largely by the aid of rational speculation that they have failed to come through them to the living God. Only the first and the last of them have retained even

the simple elements of nature religion which were originally the common inheritance of the race.

3. Turning now to the third canon, their harmony with conscience, with our aesthetic sense and with reason, as the strength of all these systems lies in their moral elements, we are warranted in expecting that if a moral system could produce satisfactory results of right living apart from true religion, or even with the aid of imperfect religious faith, we should find such results here. But their history only furnishes proof that efficient moral influence must be built upon strong and pure religious faith. Mazdaism, the most influential and satisfactory in its moral results, is at the same time the most satisfactory and the most vital in its religious faith and in its teaching of religious truth. The others possess many beautiful moral precepts, and have grasped many far-reaching moral principles; but without the regenerating and sustaining power of vital religion, they have failed to exert a growing and permanent moral influence in human history. They have lacked the power of ethical progress and, with that, of all advancement in civilization.

From the side of our sense of the beautiful and the fitting, they have given no high ideals, and have often clothed themselves in supreme ugliness; and as regards reason probably no one would seriously profess to adopt their philosophy as a rational view of the universe.

4. *Monotheistic Religions.*

We come now to three historic religions distinguished from all preceding and contemporary religions by the following characteristics :—1. Each professes belief in one only true God, a Spirit, the Maker of heaven and earth. 2. Each recognises this one God as the God of all the earth, and each recognizes the others as believers in the one God. 3. Each has a known historic origin and a personal founder, who comes not as a philosopher or teacher or reformer, but as the bearer of a revelation from God. 4. Each claims to rest upon supernatural facts.

These religions are Mosaism, Christianity and Mohammedanism. Modern Buddhism in its mythological development has assumed some of these characteristics, but without their clear conception of a personal God, and hence it cannot be classed with them. Its claim to supernaturalism, and its attempt to engraft this upon the ancient faith of India, are so evidently later inventions, and differ so widely from its original teachings and history, that they do not call for consideration here, especially as they have not even yet constituted Buddhism a truly monotheistic religion.

In our study of the monotheistic religions we shall begin with Mohammedanism, as its origin and history are peculiar. It is the last important religious system which has arisen in the world. It is a composite system borrowing doctrines from the ancient Arabian polytheism, from Mazdaism, from Judaism, and from Chris-

tianity, but fusing them in the mind of the prophet in such a way that they bear the stamp of his peculiarly intense and fanatical energy, giving them unity of spirit, if not of logical relation. It believes in God, living, intelligent, and Almighty, in angels or spirits, in prophets of whom Mohammed is supreme, in an absolute Divine predestination of all things, in a future life, resurrection and judgment, and in the divinity of the Koran. Discarding the old idolatrous forms of religious worship, it prescribes prayer, fasting, almsgiving, pilgrimages and the propagation and defence of the true faith. Its moral teaching, while in many respects strict, in others is lax and on the whole inferior to that of the great reformations of the ancient times.

Applying to it the tests of true religion, it certainly has created and maintained a most intense form of religious faith. It has shown wonderful power to propagate itself, prevailing now among one hundred and seventy millions of the race, and exhibiting fewer signs of decadence than most historic religions. It cannot therefore be said to lack power to arouse and command the religious faith of the race. It will also be seen that its creed embraces a large number of the most fundamental articles of the world's religious belief.

When we inquire into the facts of its origin, we find that it possesses the advantage of taking up into its creed the elements of natural religion, and also several of the more advanced doctrines

which appear in other religions as matter of Divine revelation. But it is absolutely without any trace of the discovery of truth by its founder through any original, religious illumination, either natural or supernatural. A religious mind either disordered or abnormal in its fanatical intensity has grasped such elements of truth often mingled with error as came in its way, has moulded them in its own forms of thought, sometimes narrow, sometimes distorted. It is thus a religious system fashioned entirely from borrowed material, which has added not a single true conception to the religious faith of the world. It derives all its distinguishing characteristics from the powerful, intense, but abnormal and fanatical personality of its founder. The crucial test of such a religion must lie in its answer to our third question, What is its relation to our moral sense, our sense of the beautiful, and to our reason? Tried by these tests, it probably stands inferior to Mazdaism and certainly to Judaism, from both of which it has largely borrowed; and so may be at once dismissed by the seeker after the highest form of religious truth. In it we see the religious spirit deformed into fanaticism through lack of moral, aesthetic, and rational guidance. The truth is found only in the unity of all these.

The systems which we have thus far examined represent the religious faith of the majority of the race in all ages of the world's history. To-day polytheism and the lower forms of nature religion command the faith of two hundred and

twenty millions, Brahmanism a more advanced polytheism one hundred and forty millions, Buddhism and Confucianism four hundred and eighty-five millions, and Mohammedanism one hundred and seventy millions; in all one thousand and fifteen millions of the fourteen hundred millions of the world's population. Were it not for the fact that these represent the various inferior ranks in the world's morality, intelligence, and civilization we might almost despair of finding truth in religious faith.

There remains but one line of religious history for our examination, that represented by the ancient Hebrew religion, with its modern developments of Judaism and Christianity.

The Religion of the Old Testament.

Like several other forms of religion which we have examined, the religion of the Old Testament has direct historical connection with the revelation of God in nature which extends back into prehistoric time. From this it receives the fundamental doctrine of God, and ideas of providence, divine moral government, and prayer, and also some simple ancient rites of worship and a few early religious institutions. But it differed from the other religions developed from the revelation of God in nature.

1. In that it most distinctly distinguishes God from His works by which He is revealed.

2. In that it holds fast to the unity and personality of God.

3. In that it develops its religious conceptions in a more profoundly spiritual way, by personal communion with God, or by immediate revelation of God to the religious consciousness.

4. In that the moral consciousness acts in very close touch with the religious. These last characteristics served to check the mythological tendency with its intellectual and moral dangers. In placing the religion of the Old Testament in comparison with other religions we leave out of account for the present any claim to a supernatural character. Its claim to miracles may be well-grounded or otherwise, but with these we are not at present dealing but solely with its characteristics as a religion. Without entering into the details of its history, we think it will at once be conceded that it was far superior as a religious faith, in its moral influence and in its harmony with the highest reason, to the polytheistic religions by which it was surrounded. Even of the religions of the great reformations, the only one which approaches it in depth of religious sentiment, in perfection of moral ideal and in doctrinal harmony with the highest reason, is Mazdaism, and this is rationally condemned by its dualism, and in its symbolic form of worship has tended to idolatry. But while recognising its superiority to other ancient forms of religion, it is by no means necessary to regard it as a perfect religion. Christ Himself taught that its elements of truth were abiding, and hence not to be destroyed, but to be fulfilled,

i.e. enlarged to a higher perfection. The great work of Paul was to separate Christianity from a slavish relation to its forms, retaining only its elements of truth (the spirit), while its imperfect forms, no longer sufficient for the higher truth brought to light by Christ were to be allowed to pass away. All this is consistent with the declarations of its own greatest teachers, who looked for a more perfect light of truth, as well as a mightier power of moral and religious influence, ministered by a Coming One who should introduce an age when all should know God, and the world be governed by righteousness and truth. The ancient Hebrew religion, whatever may be its comparative excellency, thus leads us to look beyond itself for the world's best and final religion.

It will scarcely be claimed or thought that this higher religion is to be found in Modern Judaism. In fact, it has never put forth such a claim. It professes only to abide by Moses and the prophets, and, except in a recent rationalistic form, it still awaits the Messianic age of light and truth.

We are thus finally led to examine the claims of Christianity, not merely as compared in itself with the great religions already considered, but also as the higher perfection of the ancient religion of Israel, which seems to stand superior to all its contemporaries, in religious faith, in moral purity, and in rational truth.

Christianity as the highest form of Monotheism.

No other religion more perfectly lays open its

early history than does Christianity. The person of its founder, the main facts of his life, and the first stages of the religion itself are all well known from contemporary monuments. From these historic sources we may make the following synopsis of important facts which exhibit Christianity as a religion:

1. It was the culmination of the most remarkable line of moral and religious preparation that the world has ever known.

2. In the person, life, death, and resurrection of Christ there is given a foundation for religious faith unique in human history.

3. It immediately builds upon this foundation a religious faith surpassing all others in its depth of religious conviction, its beauty of religious character, its simplicity and spirituality of religious worship, and its purity of moral life.

4. It develops further the most perfectly reasonable system of moral and religious teaching that the race has known.

The Preparations for Christianity.

The religious ideas of Judaism when Christ came were the most perfect known at that date. Its doctrines of God, Creation, Providence, Divine Law, Sin, a Future Life, a Judgment all illustrate this. They satisfied religious faith, moral sense and reason more fully than those of any other system. They were widely respected and acknowledged by thoughtful spirits among the Gentiles; and the Jewish synagogues, wherever found in the

cities of the East, had become places of resort for earnest men who had lost faith in the popular mythology, and yet could not be satisfied with the teachings of philosophy. The synagogue thus prepared the mind of Gentile as well as Jew for the coming of Christianity.

While these religious ideas were by scribes and Pharisees overlaid with formal ritualism and intellectual orthodoxy, the deeper hearts of men were crying out for the true spiritual power of religion. This is seen in the success of the ministry of John the Baptist, in Simeon and Anna, and in the devout spirits, both Jew and Gentile, who so largely welcomed the preaching of the apostles. The true ideas of God and of sin had created a "hunger and thirst after righteousness," a crying out for true moral reconciliation with God, and a "looking for redemption in Israel."

Going back beyond the period of Judaism, we find that whatever it contained of spiritual life or of preparation for spiritual life, had been built up by the work of the Hebrew prophets. The spiritual results of their work are crystallized in the writings of psalmists and wise men from David to the return from the Captivity. These writings evince the keenest and most discriminating moral judgment, combined with deep religious feeling and firm grasp of religious truth. The teachings or discourses of the prophets themselves are instinct with moral and religious life, and with a faith always full of hope for the future as well as of strength and courage for the present.

The foundation of this entire process of religious life was laid in a still earlier religious work of Moses, founding the moral, religious, and political institutions upon which the prophets built. And this again forms almost uninterrupted connection with a primitive patriarchal religion of unique simplicity, beauty, and purity, combining in an inner religious life all the truth revealed to the first religious faith through the works of God in nature.

Christianity thus appears as the culmination of a constantly developing line of the world's purest and best religious faith, running back for several thousand years. It is further to be observed that in this remarkable preparation there was maintained a constant though variously successful conflict with the two disintegrating forces which were at work in the other historical religions. These, as we have seen, were the mythological and idolatrous tendency, and the tendency to moral impurity. These repeatedly attacked the religion of the Hebrews, or rather attempted to replace or overturn it. But they were as repeatedly overcome by the opposing force of strong moral and religious conviction, first in the family life of Abraham, then in the founding of the nation by Moses, and, finally, in the long struggle of the prophetic ministry, until the people return from the captivity with faith in the one God of holiness fully established. The contrast of this development with that of the contemporaneous polytheisms is most marked.

In this development the Mosaic and prophetic stages differ from the great reformations of other religions in the following particulars:

1. The development was entirely free from the influence of philosophical speculation. We have seen the influence of Dualism, Pantheism, and Scepticism in the great reformations. In every case they weakened either religious faith or moral conviction, or both. The nearest escape from this was the Persian Mazdaism, but even this lacked power for religious growth. The people of Israel were not without philosophical conceptions, but they were completely dominated by the moral and religious spirit. For example, we have in Genesis i. an orderly cosmogony, such as enters into the philosophy of other nations, and also into their religious mythology; but here it is expressed as a religious faith without mythological embellishment. In the book of Job we have the discussion of one of the most difficult problems of ethico-religious philosophy; but its final solution is reached not as an ethical speculation or theory, but as a religious faith. The other portions of the Hebrew sacred writings which approximate to a philosophy all proceed by intuitive perception of truth rather than by logical inference. Thus in their very form they are nearly related to religious intuitions, and are constantly intermingled with them; they never become speculations. They express the direct insight of religious faith, of moral judgment, and of common sense. Without raising at present

the question of a supernatural revelation of God, we can at least discern in this history ground for the following conclusions:—(1) Granting that there is a God, and that He reveals Himself to men, here is a historical line of religious faith gradually unfolding from the purest early form of religion, and culminating in the most perfect historic religion existing in its time.

2. This line, starting from the same foundation of natural religious truth as the other religions, preserves and enlarges it, while the others obscure and lose it.

3. At the same time it maintains a growing harmony with the best moral and rational convictions of the race. It is into this line of preparation that Christ comes, and from it Christianity begins.

Christ as the Founder of Christianity.

Christ stands in the relation to Christianity not only of founder but also as Himself the foundation. As the founder of the new religion, He completes the ethical teaching of the law and the prophets which went before. This He does first of all by carrying the right back to the motive, the right heart, and then by presenting, and Himself creating, the highest of all motives, the religious love of God, as the supreme duty and the strength of all moral law. In this way religion and morality are inseparably united, and right-doing is no longer a secondary thing, a means to an end, but is in itself the natural

fruitage of the highest religious life.) Much less is it a negative thing a mere renunciation. It is the highest positive spiritual activity. But this supreme form of religion is reached, not by abstract teachings, nor yet by the practice of prescribed forms, but by the full revelation to men of three great facts or truths, each of which has its practical and concrete embodiment in Himself. These facts were not altogether new to the world. They had already been partially revealed in other forms, or foreshadowed and promised under the law and the prophets. But now they were fully brought to light not only by but in Jesus Christ. These were—

1. The Fatherhood of God revealed in Christ, who announced Himself the Son of God and the Son of Man, and taught His followers to worship God the Father in spirit and in truth in these words, "Our Father which art in Heaven."

2. The reconciliation of the prodigal and lost children to the Father through this Son.

3. The indwelling of God by His Spirit in the hearts of all His reconciled children.

These things were not set forth as dogmatic teachings, but were embodied as concrete realities in the mission work and death of Christ, and were held forth as promises to the faith of His disciples. In the synoptic gospels especially they are never dogmatically asserted. It is only in the fourth gospel, in the light of a completely unfolded Christianity, that they are categorically presented. But they are all implicitly involved

in the life, works, and teaching of Christ as given in the first three gospels. His object throughout His ministry is not to present a body of teaching to a band of disciples, but to reveal Himself as a Saviour to lost sinners. "Come unto Me all ye that labour and are heavy laden and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn of Me, for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For My yoke is easy and my burden is light." "The Son of Man is come to seek and to save that which is lost." "The Son of Man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister and to give His life a ransom for many." "The Son of Man also hath power on earth to forgive sins." "This is My blood of the covenant which is shed for many unto remission of sins." We have only to add to such familiar words the equally familiar parable of the prodigal son, and the Christian prayer, "Our Father which art in Heaven," to complete the picture. And so it is completed by St John. "God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on Him should not perish, but have eternal life." "But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, even to them that believe on His name." "Philip saith unto Him, Lord, shew us the Father and it sufficeth us. Jesus saith unto him, Have I been so long time with you, and dost thou not know Me, Philip? he that hath seen Me hath seen the Father." "No man hath seen God at any time;

the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him."

The third of our facts appears by way of promise. This promise was presented in the Old Testament, and repeated by John the Baptist; "He shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire." But it is linked with the Father's love by our Lord Himself, in a broad, general promise, "If ye being evil know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask Him." The full expansion of this promise in the fourteenth, fifteenth, and sixteenth of St John is familiar to all. It may be said all this is pure supernaturalism, which we are not yet prepared to admit. This we grant, and this we will consider as a true supernatural revelation of God presently. At this point we wish to prove only one fact, viz., that Jesus Christ presented Himself as the object of a new religious faith by which sinful men may be reconciled to God and receive the Spirit of conscious Sonship. Certainly this was a religious faith unique in religious history.

The Religious Faith built upon this Foundation.

We have already seen that the religious faith founded by Christ was not a mere system of doctrine; it was still less an external organisation or society. As in His teaching He furnished elements of doctrine, so in His call of disciples He laid the foundations of a society; but neither of these things anticipated the living faith. His

method was first the creation of spiritual life which He came to impart to men, and the life is left in turn completely to fashion the system both in doctrine and institutions. He certainly had before His mind the establishment of a spiritual kingdom, to be entered by repentance and faith, of which baptism was to be the outward and visible sign; and in which all, as children of a common Father in heaven, were to be brethren, partaking of one sacramental table. And this gospel of the kingdom they were to preach to every creature. But these ordinances neither constituted the new spiritual life nor did they create it; they expressed it, and they did not come into operation until the new religious life already existent called for them.

Nor was it a mere acceptance of His system of doctrine. Christ had set forth in His words and embodied in His work many wonderful truths. In these lay the elements of a great doctrinal system. But He made no attempt to elaborate such a system; and it was only through long generations that it became formulated, and it may be questioned whether the formulation has ever adequately expressed the full truth embodied in the life. The first preachers proclaimed not a logical system of truth but Christ Jesus, the Son of God and the Saviour of the world, and repentance and remission of sins through faith in His name.

What, then, was this religion founded on Jesus Christ, beginning at the day of Pentecost?

1. It was a spiritual thing. The third of the great religious conceptions of Christianity is the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. Christ taught His disciples to recognise the inward revelation of moral and religious truth as the immediate work of the Holy Spirit who comes from the Father "to guide into all truth." The new religious faith was such a revealing, which came to one hundred and twenty persons who fifty days after the death of the Master were assembled in an upper room for prayer. This enlightenment was personal; it came to each of them, and henceforth no man was recognised as born into the kingdom until he had received this gift of the Holy Spirit. It was first a moral enlightenment, revealing sin and judgment, and man's moral relation to God. It was next a religious enlightenment revealing Christ as the Saviour from sin, the forgiveness of sins, the fatherhood of God, from which revelation sprang "the love of God shed abroad in the heart by the Holy Ghost." This inward experience was the new religion, and it has been the true essence of Christianity from that day to this, "repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ."

It will be seen that the religion thus founded is as unique in its character as is the person of its founder as the object of religious faith. In some other religions we have some faint approaches to what is here set forth. In all we may discern a blind and almost helpless groping after it. The great enlightenment of Buddhism was a mystic

experience, but it reached only to the moral understanding, and did not profess to bring men into personal communion with God. The mysticism of all other systems has been set forth as the esoteric privilege of the few. But here is grace not only offered but received by countless numbers, not of learned men or recluses, but of the common people, the toiling, suffering masses of humanity. It verifies the words of Christ, "Come unto Me all ye that labour and are heavy laden and I will give you rest." That which is most nearly akin to it in religious history is itself almost a part of it, professedly the work of the same spirit, viz., the prophetic inspiration of the Old Testament. We are not now concerned to ask, were these remarkable phenomena natural or supernatural? All that we need to know is, were they facts? They have been so frequently repeated in the history of Christianity, even in our own age, that their reality can scarcely be questioned. The real Christianity of to-day consists of living souls who have this spiritual life within. Let us then in the light of those facts submit it to our tests of true religion.

1. Christianity is not only a vital religious faith, but it affords a fulness and perfection of that faith unknown in any other religion. In its ideal form it is toward God, perfect faith, perfect hope, perfect love. The first is a firm foundation of strength for life; the second is a fountain of joy and an inspiration to eternal progress; the last is the holy impulse of all

highest and best living. No other religion combines all these and presents them in their perfection as the ideal of religious life for all humanity. It is true that this ideal has not been perfectly realised, because Christianity, like all other religions, has been subject to the forces in humanity which make for the worse. Superstition, error, sin, and the secularization of life, have marked the best Christians with religious imperfection, and have often reduced the Christian faith of large bodies of its professors often for long periods of time to a dead form, and sometimes have made it a cloak for hypocrisy and sin. But notwithstanding all this, no other religion will for one moment bear comparison with it, as maintaining in the hearts of a large number of men in all ages a living, strong religious faith of a type far higher, and practically far more perfect than the world has known elsewhere. This will appear much more distinctly when we come to deal with its moral, aesthetic and intellectual results.

As a result of this Christianity has evinced a power of diffusion by purely spiritual forces unsurpassed in any other religion.

To estimate this aright we must bear in mind that Christianity, more than any other religion, crosses the natural inclinations of humanity. It opposes its selfishness, vanity and pride. It utterly condemns its desire for revenge. It puts a strong curb on all its passions and appetites and on its ambitions. It often calls for extreme

self-sacrifice and suffering. And in its very nature as a personal religion and a religion of the heart it cannot be propagated by force or by political authority or treaty. To be really spread it must secure the assent of the understanding, the conviction of conscience, and what St Paul calls the obedience of faith. As an outward profession it may pass from generation to generation by hereditary influence and education. But as a living, religious faith it must take possession of the spiritual nature of men individually. Its true spiritual power of dissemination and perpetuation is therefore to be measured, not by the number of nominal professed adherents which it may have gained, but by the number of men whom it has brought under the power of its living spirit, and whom it has moulded in character and life more or less perfectly to its high ideal. Estimated by this standard, no other religion of this or any other age will bear comparison with it. But even in its formal and professed extent of influence it equals the most successful religions that the world has known.

The power of Christianity to create a living, religious faith in the hearts of men, is set forth in the triumphant language of Paul. "I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth;" and, again, "Our gospel came not unto you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Spirit, and in much assurance." This power to produce religious faith was seen in the apostolic

age at Pentecost, in Jerusalem, Samaria, Antioch, Asia Minor, Macedonia, Corinth, Ephesus, and to distant Illyricum. And it is equally manifest in our day in every misson field. The North American Indians, the Pacific Islanders, the people of India, China, Japan, Madagascar, South Africa, and even Greenland, have in turn afforded the most triumphant proofs of its religious power. The great religious movements of our century which have multiplied the number of earnest living Christians a hundredfold, especially in Britain, America, and Germany, add to this weight of evidence.

Nor is the religious faith thus created of an inferior or superficial type. From Peter, Paul, James, and John, to Rutherford, Wesley, Fletcher, Keble, Havergal, or Booth, its examples of religious life stand unsurpassed in perfection of religious character. They illustrate every element of true religious faith and especially such as these:

1. Deep spiritual communion with God.
2. Loving consecration to all good work.
3. Courage and fortitude in difficulty.
4. Patience and sweetness of spirit in sorrow.
5. Triumphant victory in death.

Christianity as a living religious faith is unique in its power of revival. This is perhaps the clearest evidence of its power to maintain true religious faith among men. Like other religions it has again and again suffered decay. The moral corruption attendant upon increase of wealth has

destroyed its life. The worldly ambition of its leaders and teachers has robbed it of its spirituality and prostituted its institutions to be ministers of human ambition. The influx of superstition consequent on the decay of intellectual life has perverted the very springs of its spiritual life. And thus cold ages of formalism, and dark ages of superstition, and struggling ages of entangling political strife, and sceptical ages of decline of religious faith through lack of spiritual power have marked its history. Similar facts appear in the history of other religions. But when once they fall they never rise again. They may have been able in their first strength to maintain some degree of religious faith; but such has been their inherent imperfection that they cannot be resuscitated and fitted to the life of a new age. The religions of ancient Egypt, Assyria, Greece, Rome, and Northern Europe, and of the Pacific Islands, have passed away forever. And under the touch of the modern spirit Hinduism, Buddhism, and Confucianism are already doomed. A hundred years ago the same was predicted of Christianity. But at that very time, as in the apostolic age, in the lowly hidden places of England, Germany, and America, there was being kindled a revival of spiritual life which has multiplied the number of living Christians a hundredfold and filled the world with missionary zeal and conquests. No one who has grasped the inner significance of Christianity can doubt that it is as mighty to create and maintain and spread abroad spiritual

life in the world as it was eighteen hundred years ago.

2. This religious faith is founded in historic facts. We have already seen that a religious faith founded on myths (not as an expression of fact, but conceived as being themselves historic fact), or founded on fictions, the creations of the imagination, whether dark and superstitious, or beautiful and artistic, or cunning with priestcraft, must eventually fail. The falsity will sooner or later come to light and then the whole fabric will collapse. This will always be followed by an eclipse of faith but never by its extinction. As moral corruption may overthrow a civilization, but does not devote the race to perpetual barbarism, so faith in God, however buried under the wreck of human superstitions, will rise again. In our age the critical spirit has made strong assaults upon the historic foundations of Christianity. Around these foundations, without doubt, there has been accumulated, especially in the dark ages, a large amount of tradition and theory, conserved with superstitious veneration. In spite of all our pious fears, advancing intelligence must sweep this away. Christianity did the same for Judaism to an extent which we in our zealous repetition of the work of the old scribes and elders have utterly failed to appreciate. It consigned the old forms to their actual and necessary decay, while it preserved the living spirit. It distinguished the "holy seed which is the substance thereof" from the fallen trunk of the

ancient oak. It made no attempt to put the new wine into the old bottles, though Peter loved the old wine and could with difficulty relinquish his old bottles.

When therefore we claim for Christianity foundation in historic facts, we are not unmindful of the claims of modern, historical criticism. But it is not necessary that for the purposes of our present investigation we should enter into this difficult arena. We are quite prepared to accept all that a truly scientific criticism may find to be established truth, and we have no fear that it will affect the historic foundations of our faith. There doubtless is a human side to every part of Scripture, both Old Testament and New. And that human side has its limitations and imperfections. But they never can overturn the few simple facts on which the Christian faith is built. These facts are all embodied in the four books of the New Testament which even the most radical criticism acknowledges to be genuine. More than that they are embodied in the entire tradition, teaching, institutions, ordinances, and life of Christianity, from its first appearance in history downward. Nay, more still, they are attested by the best external, historic evidence of the age. These facts are the historic Christ, His personality, His life, His death, His rising again, and the gifts and power of the Holy Spirit. We are not for a moment prepared to relinquish our written gospels, but we wish here

to point out emphatically that these facts do not rest on the testimony of the Gospels and Acts alone. No conclusions that can possibly be reached by trustworthy criticism can for a moment impugn the fact that Christianity is a faith which apprehends God as revealed in the life, work, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ, in one word in the personality as well as the teaching of Christ, expanded by the illumination of the Holy Spirit. So long as this Christ remains as a real historic person, so long as the records even of the second century remain, so long does it remain an indisputable fact that Christianity was from the beginning a living faith in Christ as the Divine Saviour and in God as revealed in, and by Him. The religion was from the beginning not founded on the Gospel books, but upon the facts which they narrate. The religion is itself a witness to the truth of the books.

It is on this basis that Paul puts forth two facts beside the personal Christ as fundamental to our faith, His death and His resurrection, not that the other facts are therefore doubtful, they are all in harmony with the personality which created a faith in himself as come from God. Without the full gospel record, the personality, and the fundamental facts of the resurrection would in our age have grown dim and shadowy. The records bring before us the full, living Christ. But the living faith of the apostolic age and of our age rests upon

no one incident of the narrative apart from the resurrection, but upon the living, personal Christ who died for our sins and rose again. In this personal Christ whose actual appearance in history no sane man can doubt, the men of His own age found the conception of God and of our relations to Him which constitutes the living Christian faith. This sublime ideal of God and man and spiritual life was not created by cunningly devised fables.

3. But this last thought brings us to our third test of religion, the harmony of this faith with conscience, reason, and our sense of beauty, *i.e.* with the three co-ordinate elements of our spiritual being.

Christianity and our Moral Nature.

The Founder of Christianity Himself instituted this test, "By their fruits ye shall know them. Do men gather grapes of thorns or figs of thistles? A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit." By the entire answer therefore of Christianity, both in its teachings and in its results, to the demands of our moral nature, we may judge of it both comparatively and absolutely.

The following facts present the answer to this question:

1. Christianity alone begins by uniting in the fullest measure at every point religion and morality. God is holy and just and good.

The moral "law is holy and just and good." Every one who would serve God must work righteousness. "In every nation he that feareth God and worketh righteousness is accepted of Him." This moral conception is carried into every aspect of religion, and no single instance can be adduced in New Testament Christianity opposed to it or even in the slightest degree at variance with it.

2. The ethical ideal thus made an essential part of religion is the highest and most perfect type of moral law. It is complete duty to God, to man, and to ourselves. Even unbelievers must acknowledge that the most perfect and all comprehensive morality the world has known is to be found in the New Testament; the ethical principle of modern science, uncompromising fidelity to truth and fact wherever found is anticipated and taught here.

3. The perfect law of right is embodied in the concrete form in the life and character of Jesus Christ. Christ's personality we have seen to be the very foundation of Christianity. What He was, what He did, what He said, these were the historic facts which lay beneath this new faith in God. But as that faith apprehended a holy God, so the Christ of the Gospels is holy. He Himself appeals to the most searching criticism of His enemies, and says, "Which of you convinceth me of sin?" His disciples, men of far more than ordinary moral discernment, spoke of Him as "the holy and the just," as "holy, harmless,

undefiled, and separate from sinners." In this respect Christianity stands alone among religions It alone sets forth a perfect living type of both ethical and religious manhood.

4. It lays the foundation of religious life in a deep, personal sense of the evil of sin, and in a complete repentance, which is renunciation of sin. This is the perfect work of its moral teaching. Other systems do this because of the pain or sorrow of sin, Christianity because of the badness of sin. But in the Christian life this principle is not merely negative. Consecration follows and completes repentance, and binds man to all duty as a condition of communion with God. These conditions of repentance and consecration are not merely initial, they are continuous through the whole Christian life. They are a part of religion; we abide in the right relation to God only in this state of mind, not as a condition only, but as a part of our religion.

5. Its fundamental principle of the Fatherhood of God and of love as the relation of this father to man and of man to God is the highest and most powerful motive to all right-doing, and is itself the perfect right; "Love is the fulfilling of the law." It requires but a little discrimination to distinguish a higher and a lower plane of moral life. Conscience, the moral imperative, is right, but the love of goodness which "makes our willing feet in swift obedience run" is still more perfect right. The love of God is the love of all goodness, for God is good.

6. It has improved and in many cases regenerated the institutions of our modern society in Christian lands. It has influenced our laws, national customs, commercial and industrial institutions and social and domestic modes of life. It has elevated woman and has made the family relation most blessed. It has ennobled and purified literature. It has ameliorated war, abolished slavery, and founded public charities in forms unknown outside its influence. All this has been accomplished, not by external force or authority, but by the creation of conscientious convictions in the minds of the great body of the people, leading slowly, yet surely, to the needed reforms.

7. It has produced the grandest types of individual moral character that have appeared among our race. These have been at once the world's most perfect examples of religion and of morality. There have been, it is true, remarkable examples of devout men living noble lives of high moral excellence under other systems. But of these, if we set apart those belonging to the Hebrew faith, we will find them outnumbering all others taken together. But in the line of moral and religious worthies the first two centuries of Christianity could easily outnumber and outrank all that could be named from the world's preceding history. The present century of the Christian world, in examples of the highest and most perfect life founded on deep religious faith, can outnumber tenfold and outrank almost immeasurably all that the world has produced outside of

Christianity in all the ages. And in many of these, as Howard, Havelock, Lincoln, Gladstone, Nightingale, the religion, though deep and sincere, has been quiet and unobtrusive, the noble life alone being prominent.

8. It maintains unflinching and perpetual conflict with all wrong; hence the presence even in Christian lands of things evil is not an objection to Christianity, unless it can be shown that the system itself is in some way allied to them.

9. Its final ideal of the world's future is a reign of universal righteousness, and consequent human wellbeing. It calls all its followers to work for this, and it every year consecrates millions of money and a vast army of workers to this end, maintaining all the world's most beneficent and powerful organisations for the good of humanity and the promotion of right and truth.

10. If we place together the best that has been accomplished by all other religions combined, they are but as a drop in the bucket in comparison with these moral influences, agencies, and results of Christianity. It stands so pre-eminently above them all that comparison is almost needless. These things, too, are self-evidencing. They are "known and read of all men," and they form our strongest practical evidence, not only of the superiority of Christianity, but even of its divinity. The majority of men do not enter upon either philosophical or critical questions; that which satisfies both their religious and their moral nature is to them essential truth, and rightly so.

Christianity and our Æsthetic Nature.

Closely related to that moral nature by which we discern the right is that power by which we judge of the beautiful, the fitting, the harmonious. Sometimes this sense almost passes into a sense of duty. It always lays the foundation for desire as a motive to action. If the beautiful is not always an imperative duty, it is at least always exceedingly desirable, and the neglect of it is a mark of degeneracy near akin to sin. It is therefore not at all surprising that in all ages the better elements of religion should relate themselves to the beautiful, and should call its forms into their service, as a fitting method of expression. In fact, these elements have created conceptions of beauty reaching beyond the material or the intellectual into the purely moral and religious sphere. Scripture itself speaks of the Beauty of holiness, rejoices in the holy and beautiful house, and mourns over its destruction. Paul himself exhorts us to follow after the things that are lovely and of good report, *i.e.* command our respect and admiration, and frequently uses that grand old Greek word καλος to express that which is morally and religiously good. The classic καλοκαγαθος, the beautifully good, expresses the same idea in its earlier form where it was the title of the noblest men.

It is in harmony with this that the fine arts, poetry, music, painting, sculpture, and architecture, which arise from and minister to our sense

of beauty, have in all ages allied themselves to religion, and have been largely created by it. On the other hand, the moment that religion begins to delight in the absurd or the grotesque, or in the ugly, decadence in the religious spirit itself is already at work.

All these facts make it evident that we are not stepping aside from legitimate argument in seeking one verification of the essential truth of religion in its relation to our sense of the beautiful. A religion which consecrated ugliness would be, by that fact alone, very largely condemned. We have seen that other religions have possessed elements both of moral and religious truth, though often degraded and contaminated by irreligious and immoral conceptions. We shall not be surprised, therefore, to find that they have also their ideals of beauty. Doubtless the most perfect of these has been the Greek art. That art has been largely preserved to us in three forms, poetry, architecture, and sculpture, and in the old world we have many collections which fairly represent its spirit and its glory. As art, *i.e.* as the perfect expression of the ideal, it has perhaps never been excelled. But beauty lies not chiefly in the art, but in the ideal which it expresses.

All art has three fields:

1. The physical, that which appeals to the eye or ear.
2. Passion, the field of pure humanity.
3. The moral and religious.

Now one has only to walk through a gallery containing masterpieces of Greek art to see that its glory lies in the first and second fields, and that while it expresses many fine ideals in the third, on the whole it is lacking in the highest. Walk through a gallery representing our best Christian art on the other hand, and its glory stands revealed as pre-eminent in the moral and spiritual field. The same is true in poetry, while in music the field is almost entirely left to Christian art; and the best and highest forms are consecrated to religion. In illustration of this whole volumes might be written.

The Christ in art alone would furnish material for extended study while Christian poetry and music open a boundless field.

The conclusion is thus evident:

1. That Christianity in itself ministers to and develops in the highest degree our sense of beauty.

2. That it is itself beautiful, affording to art its highest ideals of moral and spiritual beauty.

3. It is thus in harmony with the truth revealed by our aesthetic sense as well as that revealed by our moral sense; and as all truth is one, it thus proves itself to belong to the unity of truth.

Christianity and Reason.

The most fundamental demand of our reason is cause. The second is for the law or order in which cause works. The discovery of these in the local field constitutes science, in the universal field philosophy. Philosophy seeks the first cause

and the relation of all things thereto. If the First Cause of the Universe is at the same time the object of our religious faith, then philosophy and religion are parallel, philosophy investigating first cause by the light of reason, religion by the light of faith. Each from its own standpoint and by its own methods leads us to the same supreme object. How do the results harmonise? The true philosophy and the true religion should meet in the common unity of truth.

In all ages religion has preceded philosophy, just as in the individual the development of the moral and religious nature follows the sensuous, and precedes the unfolding of the higher reason. Many have therefore contended that the development of a philosophy without religion is an impossibility. Certainly we have no example of such a thing in the world's history. But, on the other hand, philosophy can no more supersede our moral and religious nature, than it can supersede the use of our senses. The senses, the moral nature, the religious nature, the sense of beauty, and the reason are all means of arriving at truth; each has its distinct field; and all are in harmony with each other, and may verify and support each other, or, where error creeps in, may serve to purify each other. The history of Christianity in our own age has exhibited in a remarkable degree the influence of reason and common-sense in removing many erroneous conceptions which had attached themselves to religion.

In comparing Christianity with philosophy we

cannot step out of our proper field of religion and inductive theology to construct a philosophy. That belongs to another line of thought. We can only classify the existing systems of philosophy, ascertain the fundamental principles of each, and ask if anyone offers us substantial harmony with religion. Claiming as we do, co-ordinate authority for our religious nature as a means of reaching truth, we need seek only harmony; we cannot make any system of philosophy the test of religious truth, nor can we consent to build religion upon any philosophy.

The systems of philosophy developed by the human reason may be classified as follows in their relation to religious faith:

1. Agnostic.
2. Materialistic.
3. Dualistic.
4. Pantheistic.
5. Deistic.
6. Theistic.

The whole field of rational speculation in so far as it relates to the first cause of the Universe is covered by this classification. Further, these classes are in themselves mutually exclusive. They each admit of no compromise with the others; if one is true, all the others must be false, as will appear from the following ascending series of logical contradictories:

1. The first cause must be within reach of our knowledge, or not so.

2. The first cause must be one or more.

3. The first cause must be matter or not matter, if one.

4. The first cause must be personal or impersonal.

5. The first cause in relation to the Universe must be transcendent or immanent.

This series involves the fundamental questions of Ontology, and lays the foundations for the fundamental questions of Ethics as well.

Without attempting either the solution or even the discussion of these various problems, we may point out their relation to religion in general and to Christianity in particular.

1. First of all, universal religion asserts or assumes that God may be known, not necessarily through the senses, nor yet by the pure reason, but by the intuition of faith. A philosophy may therefore admit the impossibility of knowing God by its purely intellectual processes, and yet admit that God may be known in another way; and here we may place Kant. Only an absolute agnosticism contradicts religion.

2. The Christian religion and all higher forms of religion assert that God is one. It is scarcely necessary in this age even to mention the ancient systems of dualism which contradict this. They are now discarded by all philosophy as well as religion.

3. Christianity in common with all higher forms of religion conceives of God as a spirit. At various periods in the history of human thought materialistic philosophies have arisen

which contradict this, and find in matter alone "the promise and potency of all that is," or is to be. For our purpose it is sufficient to point out that the most widely accepted philosophies of the modern world, of the middle ages, of the Græco-Roman civilisation, and of the ancient Indian civilisation have accepted a spiritual interpretation of the universe. This may be taken as sufficient to prove that religion and the Christian religion in asserting the spirituality of God is not at variance with human reason. In fact it may be affirmed with no little show of truth that pure reason has never constructed a materialistic philosophy. Its true origin is the scientific observation of matter, and the substitution of its inductions for pure reason.

4. The Christian conception of God is that of a spiritual being personally distinct from the Universe, whether of mind or of matter, which He has created. This conception of God lies in the very nature of religion which includes my personal relation to a personal God whom I love and serve. In so far as religion and ethics are united in a sense of moral responsibility to God, it is also included in such a conception of morality. Our own distinct personality is further included in any form of moral responsibility whatever. Such personality, whether of God or the creature, and such clear distinction of God from His creatures is contradicted by the pantheistic philosophies. It cannot be denied that this form of philosophy has prevailed very

extensively both in ancient and in modern times, and has given rise to the most important objections which philosophy has interposed to religious faith. Kant himself solved it only by severing both ethics and religion from pure philosophy, and relegating both to the practical reason. But this very position of the prince of modern philosophers proves two important points:

1. That he recognised no contradiction between the pure reason and the moral and religious intuitions. This alone might be held sufficient for our purpose. The relation of reason to this truth is only zero. It is not that of a positive contradiction. They are not within the content of reason according to Kant's conception of it. But they are not thereby irrational, *i.e.* contradictory to reason. The knowledge furnished by the senses is similarly outside the content of the same pure reason, but science is not thereby pronounced irrational or contradictory to reason.

2. He recognised the validity of other forms of thought beside those furnished by the pure reason. He did not deny the validity of science on the one hand or of moral and religious truth on the other. He simply separated these from universal and necessary truth, the truth which must apply to all being as being, whether that being be mind or matter, God or the creature, or which must apply to the absolute being as such. He recognised this element of necessity as giving an absolute validity to such truth. Such a necessity in morals and religion would

be inconsistent with their very nature. The moral and religious have however a distinctive character of their own which may be regarded as taking the place of necessity. The right is not that which must be, but which ought to be; religion expresses the relation of the creature to God, not which must be, but which it is the highest good to be. Surely it cannot be claimed that either of these is irrational or lacks supreme validity as truth.

But granting the validity of these as truth, we arrive at once at the theistic philosophy. Deism is not philosophy, but only an importation into the sphere of philosophy of conceptions derived from the sphere of physical science and valid only there. Its mistake is, or rather was, akin to materialism.

Morals and religion then we may freely accept as not inconsistent with the highest reason; and this is acknowledged by the prevailing philosophy of our day by so extending the province of the reason as to make it cover, at least in part, these fields. We think this a mistake, and would prefer the old Kantian to the neo-Kantian method. The latter may easily degenerate into rationalism, *i.e.* the attempt to found religion upon reason. But the neo-Kantian has this advantage that it avoids any seeming disparagement of the validity of moral and religious truth.

When, therefore, the Christian religion stands before us as asserting that God can be known, that He is one, that He is spiritual, that He is

immanent in His creation, but that He is personally distinct from it, it seems to be in harmony with the highest rational truth, even when in the distinctness of its affirmation of the latter point it transcends the dimmer light of reason.

In this respect again it surpasses all other historic forms of religion, and thus may with confidence be accepted as the best religion that the human race has attained to.

CHAPTER III

CHRISTIANITY A DIVINE REVELATION

THE claim to be the best religion in the world is still far short of the full claim of Christianity. From the beginning it has asserted itself as the one religion, all else being either preparatory to or alien from it. "Neither is there salvation in any other, for there is none other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved." Even the ancient religion given to the chosen people is here excluded, now that Christ has come. This higher claim is asserted on the ground that Christianity is the culmination of a supernatural order introduced into the world by God for the salvation of the race from sin. "God, having of old time spoken unto the fathers in the prophets by divers portions and in divers manners, hath at the end of these days spoken unto us in His Son whom He appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the worlds; who being the effulgence of His glory, and the very image of His substance, and upholding all things by the word of His power, when He had made purification of sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high." Hence "how shall we

escape, if we neglect so great salvation? Which having at the first been spoken through the Lord was confirmed unto us by them that heard, God also bearing witness with them, both by signs and wonders, and by manifold powers, and by the gifts of the Holy Spirit, according to His own will." We have here distinctly set forth a Divine order of revelation in harmony with that of creation and providence, since it is given by the same Mediator, but distinct from these, and attested by works of power and gifts of the Holy Spirit. This revelation is centred in God's Son, and is completed through the apostolic ministry. This revelation is supernatural in its character, and its end is the salvation of men from sin. This Divine character, supernatural character, and special object of the Christian revelation is set forth, not so much in the form of a claim or pretension as of a fact already clearly established to the religious faith of the second generation of the Christian Church, to whom these words were written.

This higher faith was not merely an intellectual opinion, it was in the fullest sense a religious faith, and its demonstration was to the religious nature rather than to reason. This demonstration lies in the facts of the case. By its facts and principles, Christianity approves itself to the hearts and consciences of men as not only the best religion the world has seen, but as an order arranged of God, a supernatural gift and power, and a salvation from sin. Before proceeding to consider the facts upon which this higher Christian faith is founded,

it will be necessary to define the term supernatural, especially in its relation to religion. To do this clearly we may ask:

1. What is the natural, and what is its relation to religion?

2. What is the supernatural, and what is its relation to religion?

3. Is the supernatural reasonable, and on what grounds?

The Natural.

By the natural we understand that which takes place under the laws or order of things at present existing in the world. This is an objective definition; a subjective definition would substitute "known" for "existing." But the error of such substitution will appear from the fact that if an event took place under an unknown but existing law, and was hence considered supernatural, immediately on the discovery of the law, we should correct our opinion and say that the event was natural. The natural, then, in any realm of nature is the entire existing order and all that by its laws or forces springs from it, or may yet do so. But it must not be forgotten that each realm has its own nature or natural order. Voluntary motion and sensation are natural in our world, but only in the realm of animal life. In a plant they would be supernatural.

The natural in religion is that religious faith which arises in the presence of the facts of nature and of history as they transpire according to the

existing order of the world and of human affairs. That religion is as natural as intelligence, or morality is evident from its universality.

The Supernatural.

The supernatural is thus the introduction into the world or into any realm of nature of a power, or law or order of working not hitherto operative therein. It has been usual to rest the definition of the supernatural here, and so to make the supernatural include miracles and all deviations from or intrusions into the order of nature, however transitory they may prove to be. This breadth of meaning we think by no means conducive to accuracy of conception in this matter. We shall see presently that there is a very wide difference between the Christ, including the incarnation and the resurrection by which He enters upon His new relations to humanity and to the moral universe, and the mighty works which He wrought during His earthly life. The same may be said of the Pentecostal gift of the Holy Spirit by which a new order of religious power was introduced into the world, and the miraculous gifts which accompanied that supreme and permanent endowment of the Church. Historically these have been transitory, or at most occasional; the other is a new order, in scriptural language, "a new heaven and a new earth." It is by no means certain that in every case the miracles were supernatural; they may have been as natural to Christ as the lifting of a stone is natural to a

man, while supernatural to the stone itself. But the whole question of the nature and office of miracle in the process of Divine revelation will appear later. At present, for the sake of clear thought, we ask our readers to consent to define the supernatural as the introduction into the world or into any realm of nature of a new power or order of working not before therein existing, such order or power becoming thereby an abiding new nature, an added higher nature, which is quite in accord with the etymology of the word supernatural.

It will be seen that the supernatural does not imply anything contrary to nature, nor does it imply the abrogation or suspension of previous law or order. In fact, if nature and the supernatural are from the same hand and mind, then we should expect them to be in accord and not contradictory. The linking of the one to the other should be in harmony with the "nature" of both.

Before proceeding to consider the relation of the supernatural to religion, let us first consider our third question—

Is the Supernatural Reasonable?

This question cannot be answered *a priori*. The supernatural is not the universal and necessary. Unless we are materialists or pantheists, both the natural and the supernatural fall within the domain of science and not of philosophy. They are to be studied by observation of facts, not by

deduction from any first principles. If, therefore, the supernatural is reasonable, it is so in the light of known facts; it is in harmony with the analogy of nature. The Baconian method swept away the construction of subjective sciences of nature; it must do the same for the supernatural.

Have we then in the past history of our world any traces of the supernatural? *i.e.* have there at any time appeared new forms of force, or new orders of working? If so, what has been the relation of these new forces to the pre-existing order?

1. The history of our world as unfolded in the geological record clearly proves that at various times new forces have made their appearance in the world. Every attempt of science to evolve life from inorganic matter has failed, and all science goes to establish the fact that the introduction of life was a new force and order of things, a new nature, and hence, at the beginning, supernatural to the existing world. The same may be said of thought or intellectual life. The clumsy attempts to account for moral life and all the higher forms of spiritual activity of which we are conscious are so clearly the creatures of imagination that as yet they are utterly without scientific basis. Doubtless all these as introduced were in harmony with nature, but not out of nature. They were above nature, a new and higher birth.

2. These new forces have not superseded or suspended or destroyed the existing or preceding

natural order in each case. They have rather been engrafted on and added to it.

3. The new forces have themselves become a permanent and higher order, a new nature, in the world, and that not in the accidents of their first occurrence, but in their essential elements.

4. The whole doctrine of evolution from the standpoint of theistic philosophy is linked in with these facts. If the first principle of all philosophy is correct, that cause and effect are equal and inseparable, then all true evolution is evolution, not of material forces, but of a Divine plan in which the whole Universe moves to its higher perfection of nature by a continually added energy from the personal will of the immanent God.

With these observations of science, and with this philosophy, the supernatural as the coming into the world of a new and higher order is in perfect harmony, and it cannot be rejected as in any way contradictory to reason. It must be accepted or rejected solely in the light of the evidence offered.

Supernatural Religion.

We have already seen that religion implies two factors in the order of nature: (1) a power or capacity in man to know God, and (2) revealing facts which call that power into activity. Both these are implied in Paul's statement of the facts of the case (Rom. i. 19-21). In each of these factors the supernatural may appear. The super-

natural may be a higher capacity for the knowledge of God, a subjective supernatural, revealing God more fully even in the old facts both of creation and providence. It may also appear in a new order of facts, and especially in new moral and religious forces working in human life and history, by which God is more clearly and perfectly revealed, in elements of His character and relations to us which before were but dimly, if at all, apprehended. For the apprehension of these new facts the new power may be absolutely essential. The old eyes might be blind to the new light.

The Evidence of the Divine and Supernatural Order in Christianity.

This evidence lies in facts either recorded in credible history or manifestly existent to-day. If there has been in the history of the race a Divine plan unfolding, to use Paul's word, or evolving, in modern phrase, a higher perfection of the moral and religious life of humanity, and if that plan has involved the introduction of new moral and religious forces founded upon supernatural revealing facts, and if it has further involved the granting to man of greatly increased moral and religious insight, then we should be able clearly to trace such process of evolution in the world's religious history. And if Christianity is the supreme culmination of this process, and all other religions are but the wrecks of decay which have fallen out by the way, and are only

remembered as fossils of a far past age, or as strange survivors of a life gone by, then Christianity stands not only as the best but as the only religion. Whatever was true or good or useful in all others survives here, and is embraced in this. But there is one step more which goes beyond this analogy of nature. If our world is a world of moral and spiritual ruins, then the old religions may be but part of the old ruins, and the new alone represent the true spiritual life of to-day.

What then are the facts which present conclusive evidence of the presence of a Divine and supernatural order in Christianity?

1. Christianity alone furnishes an orderly and progressive line of moral and religious development, beginning with the primitive and prehistoric foundations of nature religion, and moving onward and upward in well-marked successive steps to its present position of the most perfect of all religions. Arising out of the primitive nature religion, we find the simple yet deeply devout faith of the patriarchal age, with its simple forms of worship. Next comes the long line of moral development, founded on the Mosaic institutions, and completed in the work of the prophets. Planted back in this is the religious faith of the Messianic hope, forming the religious side of the work of the prophetic order, and culminating in such remarkable prophetic insight and foresight of faith as is manifest in the latter Isaiah. Finally comes a revival of spiritual life under John the Baptist, into which

Christ comes as the culmination, for whom all else was but a foreordered preparation. It will be seen that this line is not a mere reformation or series of reformations. It is positively progressive, a movement onward and upward. This of itself would point it out as the true order of God, whether natural or supernatural. If there be a God ordering the world and its movement, then, however we may find in degeneration and death the work of the imperfection or sin of the creature, we must recognise His hand in the great movement by which the creation or any one realm of creation moves upward to the goal of perfection. This is as much a religious faith as a rational conclusion.

2. This orderly progress proceeds at every stage through a conscious communion of the human spirit with God. From the beginning of its recorded history there is evidence, not only of the general feeling after God and recognition of Him in nature, but also of an inner consciousness of God speaking within the human soul. This, as we shall see more fully hereafter, is the essential and common element in the whole course of revelation. It is no sporadic phenomenon of material or sensuous theophany, nor of trance vision or dream with religious interpretation, or clairvoyant or hypnotic frenzy, but a clear, strong, moral and religious conviction of God's mind and will. In most cases no mention is made of the means by which this conviction was awakened. In some cases the more

sensuous and physical means are mentioned. These were the staple of the so-called revelations of other religions. They are perhaps the exception in the line which leads to Christ, and mark, we think, its lower forms. It is quite certain that in all ages true moral and religious impressions or convictions have come to man through dreams or through abnormal physical states, and probably such is still the case. But it is also certain that in such cases a superstitious emphasis is often placed upon the medium, while a true and pure faith will recognise that the truth is the all-important matter, however communicated. Such truth clearly forms the substance of the entire preparatory line of religious life, which, as we have seen, leads up to Christianity. Such were the convictions of duty and Divine direction of life and Divine promise which came to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; the moral light given to Moses, which was also accompanied by a conviction of a Divine mission and of promises to His faith, and the Divine call and messages to Samuel and the entire line of prophets. In every case, whatever may have been the particular psychological method by which truth was unfolded, there was a clear apprehension of moral and religious truth. But more, this truth was accompanied by a conviction of the presence and authority of God. Already the presence of God in nature was recognised. The voice of conscience was also recognised as the spirit of the same God, teaching man wisdom and understanding. And

now in these special calls, these unfoldings of new truth, these messages and burdens, there was the clearest conviction of the presence of the same spirit. The men in whose experience these phenomena appear were such men as Abraham, of whom a Divine call and light is recorded; Moses, Samuel, the long line of prophets; a line of men of contemplation and spiritual insight, writers of hymns and proverbs; and, finally, priestly recorders and interpreters of the current history of the time.

3. This line of men with special call and gifts of spiritual insight was accompanied by a course of history most intimately identified with their work. Without claiming for this history a miraculous character, or placing it beyond the action of natural law, it was perhaps, as no other history, dominated by the religious spirit, and served in a remarkable degree for the unfolding of religious ideas and truth.

4. The outcome of these concurrent lines was (*a*), a body of moral and religious truth such as appeared nowhere else in the world; this we have already seen; and (*b*), that peculiar body of promise and prediction which is known as Messianic prophecy. At whatever point we date the beginning of this peculiar phenomena, it stands unique in the world's religious history. It runs continuously through centuries. It constantly takes its form from the peculiarities of contemporary history, and so varies both in its manner of conception and of presentation.

But it moves with unfaltering certainty to a broader outlook and to a more distinct vision of good things to come, and becomes itself a great religious faith, taking possession of a whole nation, and inspiring its best men with the loftiest religious hopes.

4. This line of progressive development finds its culmination in Jesus Christ. He fulfils both the law and the prophets. The line of religious faith is fulfilled or completed by the most perfect conception of the attributes and nature of God, and of His relation to humanity that the world has yet known; a conception which fills and satisfies the religious faith of humanity. Its moral teaching was completed, fulfilled, by the unfolding in Christ and His teaching of the most perfect moral ideal, an ideal after which the conscience and life of humanity is still feebly striving. If the present evolutionary view of ethics, as a constant struggle towards the moral ideal which continually moves upward, be the true view, its advocates are surely bound to see that the whole Christian world for nearly nineteen centuries has found that ideal in Jesus of Nazareth, and has not yet been able to reach it in practical life, or surpass it in ideal conception. And finally this same Jesus of Nazareth fulfilled the strange Messianic hope of Israel, not in its lower and material form, as the literalists of that day expected, and as some of them to-day would still seek to prove, but in its true spiritual significance, as a king-

dom of righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit.

5. This Christ Himself appears as the most Divine of all revelations of God, as the faith of the apostolic age expresses it, "The word of God made flesh." This is certainly not only Divine but supernatural, and if this can be established to the world's religious faith, then it not only stamps Christianity as supernatural in the highest sense, but it explains, as partaking of the same Divine and supernatural character, all the various steps which preceded and prepared the way for Him. It is scarcely necessary to prove as a matter of fact from the New Testament that the whole apostolic preaching centred around three propositions:

(1) The Incarnation; God's Son manifest in the flesh.

(2) The Atonement; forgiveness of sins offered to men in His name.

(3) The Mediatorial Kingdom; this Christ risen from the dead and ascended to the right hand of the Father as the head of the Church.

This is all succinctly presented in 1 Tim. iii. 16, in the fifteenth of first Corinthians, and in the first of Romans. This was most clearly the faith of the Apostolic Church, and if this faith was true, in its very nature it stamps Christianity as Divine and supernatural, inasmuch as it is based on a supernatural foundation of fact. We shall see later that it is accompanied by supernatural capacity, and that these two, the facts and the

capacity, introduce a new and higher order of religious life. The faith of the early Church in Christ as Divine is indisputable. The very existence of the Ebionites or Judaizing Christians proves this. How was Jesus demonstrated to that faith as the Son of God? I am not now speaking of any technical definition of Christ's Sonship. Doubtless this had not yet been made. But without such technical definition; Christ under this title was the object of worship, faith and religious affection, such as belongs to God alone. How came He to command this?

The records show clearly that this faith arose—

1. Out of the historic facts of His life, especially the resurrection.

2. From the impression of His personality and character.

3. Through the inward demonstration by the Holy Spirit of His relation to our salvation. The faith in Christ as the Son of God is thus not based on reason or logical demonstration, though it may be quite reasonable. It is properly a religious faith, and not a philosophical speculation, or scientific theory.

1. At the basis of this faith lay certain historic facts. The most prominent of these was the resurrection. So important was this that Paul on this ground alone stakes the very existence of the Christian faith, 1 Cor. xv. 13-19. "If Christ hath not been raised, then is our preaching vain, your faith also is vain." But while the resurrection was with Paul central, it did not

stand alone. Strange as it may appear His death was as necessary to this faith as the resurrection, and on these two historic facts throughout the Epistles, the faith in Christ as the Son of God is founded. "He died and rose again." But we would make a great mistake if we concluded from the silence of the Epistles that the faith of the early Church embraced nothing beyond these two main facts. In the brief outlines of apostolic preaching given in the Acts we have everywhere reference to a life filled in with mighty works. The first sermon sets Him forth as "a man approved of God among you by mighty works and wonders and signs, which God did by Him in the midst of you, even as ye yourselves know" (Acts ii. 22). This first note is continued throughout the book. The resurrection is central even in this first sermon, but the mighty works support it by their common accord. When we come to examine the place of miracles in the process of Divine revelation we shall see how well-fitted they were to perform this subordinate part, to prepare the way as it were for the resurrection and how the resurrection itself must be the supreme demonstration, not as a mere miracle, but as like the death of Christ, an essential part of His work. The presence of a man among them for three years, going about performing continually these works of Divine power and mercy, then dying a cruel death through the envy of sinners, and on the third day coming forth again and ap-

pearing in their midst was surely foundation for the religious faith expressed in the exclamation of Thomas, "My Lord and my God."

The gospel of St John was written for the purpose of proving to the faith of the Church that Jesus was the Son of God, John xx. 31. It collects, combines, and enlarges on all in the life and words of Christ which specially pointed to this conclusion, or rather led to this conviction. It is a summary of the faith of the early Church apprehending Christ in His Divine character. On the other hand, the synoptic gospels give us a summary of the memories of the apostles and eye-witnesses, as they related and hand down the words and works of Christ and the facts of His life during the age of the first apostolic preaching and teaching. In St John we see the faith established, the edifice fully built, in the synoptics, the stones out of which it was building. In the Acts and Epistles, we get glimpses of the process of structure.

Turning first to the synoptics, how is Christ there presented to the religious faith of the penitent sinner? We say religious faith, for the Divine Christ is first revealed to religious faith; in St John that religious faith is already passing into intellectual definition, though without yet losing its religious character and power.

(1) We have rehearsed by each of these the supernatural facts already referred to, viz., His mighty works, the Divine power and truth of His doctrine, and, after His death, His resurrec-

tion from the dead. Two add to this supernatural events attending His birth and early life.

(2) These facts are attested historically, not only by the four gospel writings, and incidentally by the Acts and the Epistles, but they are clearly recognised as the foundation facts of the new faith by profane writers, and by enemies of the faith. True or false they formed the foundation of the faith which at that date came into existence. This foundation of fact was proclaimed openly in Jerusalem and all parts of Palestine, immediately after their occurrence, if the record is correct, two months after the resurrection. The preaching of these facts extended through the most enlightened portions of the Roman Empire within the lifetime of even the older eye-witnesses; and even in the face of the severest persecution and most strenuous opposition, it founded a strong and profound religious faith. Under such circumstances the very existence of the religion proves the reality of the historic facts. You cannot account for it apart from them.

2. But at least with the first believers, and, through their testimony, with all subsequent hearers, the personality of Christ entered into and formed the foundation of their faith in His Divinity quite as much as the separate facts of His life. He stood out in a world of sinners and in a degenerate age and country, not only as a good man with some share of human infirmity, but conspicuous, as we have seen, by a Divine

spotless freedom from sin. He separated Himself from all personal ambitions, passions, cares, selfish interests and entanglements, such as usually occupy men and fill up their lives, that He might do the work which His Father gave Him. He entered upon that work under the impulse of a spiritual power, which, while shared in a minor measure by thousands who came to John's baptism, marked Him out at once as pre-eminent, and to John's own consciousness as immeasurably his own superior. "He shall baptise you with Holy Spirit and with fire." His ministry at once evinced this Divine power. "He taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes." "Never man so spake." "All men wondered at the gracious words which proceeded out of His mouth." Peter makes his confession, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God"; and again, "Lord, to whom shall we go, for Thou alone hast the words of eternal life." Nor was this all, for in His presence, even while He seemed to refuse her, the Syro-phenician woman is inspired with the faith which cries out, "Yea, Lord, yet the dogs under the table eat of the children's crumbs." Even to-day an open-hearted man cannot read the simple record of these fragmentary memories without feeling the power of this remarkable moral and spiritual personality.

3. But in the presence of these facts and under the influence of this personality the full faith was called forth only by the influence of the Holy Spirit. Pentecost placed the Christ in a new

relation to the conscious thoughts of the disciples. From that day His true Divinity began to manifest itself to their faith. They saw Him now as they had not seen Him before as the risen and ascended Saviour, exalted at the right hand of the Father, "granting repentance to Israel." Their religious faith which from childhood had fed on the Messianic promises of the prophets now at once linked Jesus to these promises, and found in Him, not the material and political fulfilment which they had looked for under the teaching of the scribes, but a new and spiritual fulfilment. And this brings us to the last phase of the supernatural and Divine character of Christianity.

The Supernatural Religious Capacity which it brought to the Race.

This is known as the gift of the Holy Spirit, and with its first appearance on the day of Pentecost, Christianity was first fully introduced as a living religious faith into the world. What was this gift of the Holy Spirit? It consisted essentially of deep convictions of sin, followed by a view of God in Christ as forgiving sin, and an inward love, joy, peace, in fact a sense of completely changed moral and religious relation to God. This was a new thing in the world's moral and religious history. Occasional and partial anticipations of it had been seen in the past history of the Hebrew people, but never before after the manner and to the extent now experienced. This new moral and religious power

according to the record reached three thousand people on the first day, and there cannot be question that in a single generation it reached myriads of people in all the eastern parts of the empire, and it is a fact patent on the very face of history that in three hundred years it had conquered the Roman Empire, not by the power of arms, but by the influence of religious ideas. We have already seen that it produced a perfection and a type of moral and religious character unknown in the world before, and not yet surpassed.

2. We find this moral power not universally, but still quite frequently, accompanied by some extraordinary intellectual phenomena known as the gifts of tongues, and less frequently by prescience of future events. The precise nature of these events it may be difficult now to determine but that there did take place things out of the common order of nature, and that these emphasized the moral and religious power cannot be doubted.

3. We find further a frequent reference to remarkable power of healing, and other extraordinary manifestations in the region of physical life accompanying the moral and religious influence spoken of as the gift of the Holy Spirit.

It is to be noted that the entire series of events thus set before us are not detached or isolated facts, each depending on the individual testimony by which they are affirmed. They are parts of a great united movement, of the date and character of which there cannot be the slightest question,

and the effects of which endure in all kinds of historic monuments to this day. Its central element has become a permanent fact in the world, although at the beginning it was quite as extraordinary as its transitory and occasional intellectual and physical accompaniments. It is a mistake to regard the illuminating and converting power as natural, and the tongues and miracles alone as supernatural. Both doubtless have relation to natural law, but both transcend it. But the miraculous accompaniments were but occasional at furthest, an extension at times of the miraculous power into the realm of our physical nature. In a short time they apparently ceased. The true central supernatural was the spiritual influence known as the gift of the Holy Ghost. The strange accompanying phenomena but emphasized its supernatural character, *i.e.* made all men feel more sensibly the special presence of God, but that presence was essentially the Holy Spirit in the hearts of believers. Its universal supernatural result was not the healing of disease, or the raising of the dead, or the gift of tongues, but the new spiritual life, which they recognised as a new creation, a spiritual resurrection, a new life from the dead.

Turning our attention then to this central spiritual power, we note:

1. That it was a deep moral and religious influence, creating not only strong emotions, but also permanent convictions of truth.

2. That this influence was increased by the ac-

companiments. They extended it to men whose natures were so spiritually dull and dead that they had no receptive power for truth. 1 Cor. xiv. 21, 22.

3. It is never trifling or immoral.

4. It is never irrational.

5. It convinced men not so much by a process of logic as by awakening of and appeal to the moral and religious intuitions. Hence resistance to it was sin and unbelief.

6. This moral and religious influence has become a new order. It is continuous to this day.

This last point is attested by the whole history of the Church. It is true that the Church has repeatedly fallen back to a lower plane, and has lived on the spiritual level of the Old Testament rather than of the Apostolic Age; but again and again the revival of the Divine apostolic life has appeared, and the history of the last one hundred and fifty years has proved by the evidence of facts, which may be known and read of all men, that this Divine power is now the law and order of grace, and constitutes the very essence of the Christian religion. The supernatural gift of the Holy Ghost is not a mere superadded attestation, but it is the presence and power of God Himself in His moral world, creating a new and higher moral and religious order. It is this which gives to Christianity its supernatural character and its true pre-eminence above all the old religions founded in nature; nay, more, which makes it now the only way and truth and life.

This Supernatural Religion the World's Salvation from Sin.

We have already seen that the introduction from time to time of new moral and religious forces into the world is in harmony with the history of physical life, and hence not unreasonable. It may be completely justified on the principle of evolution as a law of universal progress. Nature is not a fixed and eternal perfection, but an onward movement from the imperfect toward the perfect, and perhaps we might say from the finite toward the infinite. This of itself proves nature to be not the perfect and infinite and self-sustained, but the imperfect and the finite and the derived. Under the law of causation, if it has an onward movement towards higher perfection, it must be not from itself, but from the original source of its being. Each new impulse towards a higher perfection of being is thus supernatural. All higher life is born from above. The inorganic becomes the organic by being lifted into a higher life from above. So the vegetable is transformed to animal from above by the assimilating power of the higher life. Thus no student of nature can pronounce successive epochs of higher revelation of God unreasonable. Christ Himself comes in the line of a universal order.

But there is another reason for the supernatural in moral and religious life. Sin has ruined the old order. This again does not stand as a fact without analogy. Degeneration is a common

fact in the history of all physical life, and sin is a moral and religious degeneration. But in the physical life the degeneration of the old life is remedied by the incoming of the new. And in the moral and religious life the ruin of sin is repaired by a new life from above. Outside of Christianity we know of but one system that has been framed for this end, and that went not to the root but to the branches, it was a remedy for misery and sorrow rather than for sin.

That the salvation of the world from sin is the purpose of Christianity is surely beyond peradventure. Its founder Himself declares, He "came not to call the righteous but sinners to repentance," and He "came to seek and to save that which was lost." The first preachers of Christianity declare that "God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on Him should not perish, but have eternal life"; and, again, that "He sent Him to bless you in turning away every one of you from your iniquities." How far it succeeds in this great work may be judged from what we have already learned of the moral results of Christianity. It has but, as it were, commenced its mission. It has scarcely touched more than one-third of this world of sin. It has perfectly reached the moral depths of no nation or body of people. The ruin which it seeks to remedy reaches to the deepest foundations of human life, and it is cemented and consolidated by the lapse of untold ages. But out of that

ruin already countless myriads have been redeemed, and new institutions have been created, which are at least vestibules to the city of God. Thus Christianity has already vindicated its fitness for its mission, and to that mission it is addressing itself to-day with an energy of zeal and faith, and with a spiritual power unknown in all the past.

This mission then of the world's salvation from sin, a mission attempted by no other agency to-day, at once justifies and proves the Divine and supernatural character of Christianity.

Summary.

We are now prepared to bring the different elements of this investigation to its final conclusion.

Christ is the founder and centre of Christianity. He stands forth distinctly as sent by God, and has been demonstrated to the religious faith of His own age and of succeeding ages as the Son of God. Leading up to Him, and consciously or unconsciously preparing for Him, we have an order of revelation of God running back through the whole reach of human history, and giving us the highest moral and religious development of ancient civilisation. Parallel to this the ancient world's highest intellectual and political developments are almost equally conspicuous in preparing the way for His work.

Setting forth from Him, and founded on Him as the object of its faith, we have a movement of

supernatural moral and religious power forming a new order which reaches to our day.

The professed object, the manifest tendency, and the incipient success of this work are all one, viz., the salvation of the world from the obvious ruin of sin. When therefore religious faith has apprehended this movement as Divine, and its founder as the Son of God, may we not challenge moral sense, the sense of all fitness and reason itself, in support of this religious faith?

It does not profess to be a truth discovered by reason, or founded on the arguments of reason or science, but upon religious faith. But we ask again, is not this religious faith reasonable? Is it not a supremely moral faith? Is it not a beautiful faith? If so, can it be other than true? And in its deepest certainty this faith affirms that God hath sent His Son, and that in Him we have eternal life.

But when we see in this faith the natural and the supernatural blending, the human and the Divine working together, when we see it as a unity of truth, a unity of spirit, and of spiritual power, a progressive life in humanity, a true development, leading up to an inexhaustible fulness of truth, and infinite resources of moral power such as appear in all the works of God, we surely cannot doubt that it is of God, His supreme revelation of Himself to man, not simply the highest and best of natural religions, but, while in the line of nature, far transcending nature, a new creation for the world's redemption from sin.

PART II

THE NATURE AND PROCESS OF REVELATION AND THE FORMATION OF THE WORD OF GOD

CHAPTER I

PRELIMINARY

OUR investigation thus far assures us of the religious authority of Christianity, and of its supernatural character as given of God as the foundation of the world's religious faith. But before proceeding to investigate the contents of that faith as religious truth, *i.e.* to the study of Christian doctrine, we must know definitely the sources from which that doctrine is to be learned. This is especially necessary where, as in the case of the Christian religion, there are varieties of opinion among its followers. We have already seen that when the question was, What is religious truth? the answer was that religious truth must be demonstrated to man's spiritual nature. But when now the question is, What is true Christian teaching? there must be some authority or standard by which professed forms of Christian

teaching, wherever they vary, may be judged. As Christianity is one of the religions possessing sacred books, it might be supposed that we could at once assume that these books constituted the only authoritative standard of Christian teaching. But an examination of Christian opinion on this point shows that both ecclesiastical authority and the individual Christian consciousness have been called in as co-ordinate with these sacred books. A subordinate question is the determination of the sacred books themselves, as to whether or not they include certain books known as Apocryphal. These facts make it necessary at the very outset of the study of Christian Theology to examine the nature and process of this Divine Revelation more fully, and especially the formation of its sacred books, that we may in the light of the historic facts determine their place in the investigation of Christian Doctrine. This examination we may make under three heads :—

1. The nature and process of Revelation.

2. Inspiration and the creation of the written Word.

3. The Canon.

4. We may then consider the Authority of Scripture.

CHAPTER II

THE NATURE AND PROCESS OF THE CHRISTIAN REVELATION

As we have already seen, in its very meaning the term revelation has its subjective and its objective side. It implies a human capacity to receive a revelation, and a Divine activity by which revelation is made. It therefore includes the entire historical process by which God imparts and man receives true ideas of God, His will, and His works. The first part of our investigation is therefore essentially historical. It will assume, as the very existence of religion in the world implies, that in the constitution of the universe and the nature of man a revelation of God is not only possible, but has been made; and it takes as already proven that Christianity represents that revelation, *i.e.* is its supreme result. It is with this result and with the entire process by which it has been reached that we have now to deal. As both the process and the result are matters of history or fact, the method here is essentially inductive. We have no right to construct an *a priori* theory. The simple questions are, How has God revealed Himself to men? What is the form or nature of this revelation? and where is it to be found?

In answering these questions we must include in revelation the sum total of knowledge of God and of His will which has come into the actual possession of the race as a whole, or of any part or even individual of the race. The revelation to be truly such must have been completed in actual knowledge. There may be now in existence potential elements of knowledge, Divine works intended to reveal God's will, but which no man has yet been able to read. But until they are read, through the gift to man of a more perfect religious illumination or capacity for the knowledge of God, they are not yet a completed revelation; they are like the life and work of Christ before Pentecost. The revelation as it now exists is the sum total of the knowledge of God received by man.

The study of the complete content of this revelation does not concern us here. We have only two passing observations to offer, both of which are, we think, fair historical inductions.

The first is that no part of this revelation once in possession of the race has ever been lost. We do not affirm this of the specific apprehension of individual statements of truth. Abraham, for example, may have received particular promises or commands, similar to those recorded, of which tradition has preserved no remembrance. There may have been and certainly were numbers of particular prophetic discourses, warnings and threatenings of which we have no record. So St John says at the close of his Gospel, "There

are also many other things which Jesus did, the which if they should be written, every one, I suppose, that even the world itself could not contain the books that should be written." But when we say that Divine revelation once received has never been lost, we refer, not to specific communications, but to what we may call principles of truth. No true idea of God has been lost, no principle of moral obligation has passed out of sight. No ground of faith or light upon human life once given to men has utterly perished. We make this assertion as a general induction from the entire field of modern research and recovery of ancient history. Entirely forgotten languages have been recovered; knowledge of entirely forgotten religions has been recovered; forgotten chapters in history, and bodies of ancient law, and institutions of ancient civilisation have been recovered, but no word or doctrine which represents a lost idea of God which could to-day command religious faith. It is therefore as a matter of fair historic induction that we assert that no truth of God has ever been lost.

Our second inductive observation is that the Christian Scriptures as they now exist contain the sum total of this revelation of God. Here again we refer not to the specific forms, but to the truth, the ideas of God and of duty which they conveyed, in so far as these forms were adequate to convey or express the truth. This proposition also we think a fair induction

from our modern historical and comparative science of religion. We have found nothing of truth in the religions of the past which Christianity has omitted; nothing to which it has not given a more perfect and fitting expression.

If these two statements are correct then our task of understanding as well the content as the nature and method of Divine revelation is greatly simplified. We are not driven to examine the whole world's literature or even the whole wide field of sacred books. In two records, the Old Testament and the New, we have before us the materials for the study of the full content of Divine revelation and for the understanding of its nature and general method.

But while we may safely assume that these two volumes give us the accumulated result of the entire process of revelation, they by no means present us with the entire historical process. These writings themselves recognise pre-existing religious truth already in possession of men when they began to be written. Men had already a religious vocabulary, and hence ideas of God and His will, before either the Pentateuch or the documents which it incorporated were written. When the author of Gen. i. wrote "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth," men had already a name for God, a conception of creative power and wisdom, and a comprehensive expression for the sum total of the created universe. When Moses spake, "Hear, O Israel, the Lord thy God is one

Lord," the unity of God was not first discovered, but only maintained against polytheistic tendencies.

The sacred Scriptures of the Hebrews and of the Christians are thus neither the whole nor the beginning of the process of Divine revelation, but only the culmination of a process which doubtless began with the beginning of the race, which certainly goes back beyond the beginning of historic record, but which has found its goal in Jesus Christ. We have already claimed that they sum up all the truth as to God which has ever been in possession of the race, that no fragment of what has once been revealed has ever been lost; but while our modern historical and archæological studies in the science of religion seem clearly to establish this fact, they also reveal to us, that many important elements, in fact the most universal elements of this truth, were in possession of the race in various primitive forms prior to the existence of even the earlier portions of our Scriptures.

The Scriptures themselves thus reveal and even in more direct statements recognise a primitive, fundamental, and universal revelation of God to man before Moses or Abraham. In fact they themselves carry back revelation as the foundation of moral and religious order and ideas, both before and after the origin of sin, to the very beginning of the race. The two creation documents placed in the forefront of Genesis include the foundations not only of

physical nature, but also of moral, religious, social and industrial life.

In examining the method of revelation this primitive revelation must be taken into account, stretching far back into the prehistoric life of humanity.

It has been customary to separate this primitive and universal revelation of God to man from that specifically recorded in our Scriptures, and to call the first natural religion and its method the light of nature, while the latter is considered supernatural, both as to content and method of revelation. We think that this distinction is not warranted by Scripture itself, which knows no distinction between that revelation in which "the heavens declare the glory of God," and that in which the word of the Lord came to the prophets. Both revelations are recognised alike as Divine truth, and are received by the same faculty of moral and religious understanding. They appeal to faith by the power of truth and with the authority of truth, which is the authority of God, and are enforced by inward conviction and not by outward compulsion. The entire conception of the enforcement upon the world, *ab extra*, of religious ideas by the employment of either manifest or occult supernatural agencies, and the theory which regards such ideas as something essentially different from those which appeal only to our convictions of faith, conscience, and reason, and so constituting in a special sense the supernatural revelation, are alike foreign to the

teaching of the prophets of the Old Testament, and still more to that of Christ and His apostles in the New. We shall see presently the function of the supernatural in the process of revelation, but it is not such as to divide the contents of revelation into natural and supernatural truth. All truth is one, is Divine, is of God. A distinction which will bring us more directly to the heart of our subject, lies between the process by which truth comes to each individual mind, and that by which it comes to the world at large. The two processes are intimately related, because all knowledge which is to-day the common possession or heritage of the whole world, was first revealed to some one man. While it would be a great mistake to make either our own experience of knowing God, or that of any one man who has ever lived the full measure either of the method or content of Divine revelation, it is evident that in every human experience we must find at least the first principles, the A B C of both.

Let us begin then with any truly Christian man, one who knows God by the inward light of truth and of the spirit, and ask what does he know of God? and how has he come by this knowledge?

The man whom we thus question may know much less of God than some men have known; he certainly will know less than all other men taken together. But that which he does know will be living religious knowledge, knowledge which has passed into his entire spiritual life,

and as such it is completed revelation. It is truth which has come from God and has found man. It is not a mere means of knowing God, such as a spoken or written word might be, or such as God's works of creation or providence, or even of miracle may be; but it is actual living knowledge of God, and so represents the completed course of revelation from God to man.

Again, since this knowledge has come from God and has reached man, the way by which it has come must represent or include all the essential elements of revelation, the steps without which a revelation cannot be made. It may also include accidental peculiarities, matters which may vary in other cases; but that which has not in some way, and at some point of the process, entered into this revelation, cannot be considered essential, and the essentials are certainly the most important part of any process.

Asking then such a man what he knows of God, he will tell you that he knows that God exists, that He is a holy God, and yet that He is a God of loving-kindness and truth, keeping promises of grace and mercy even for sinful men, and that for Christ's sake He forgives sins; that He calls us to be holy, and that at the last He will judge us according to our works. The moral and religious truth thus expressed is not a theory or a mere collection of speculative opinions, but the truth as apprehended by a firm religious faith. If you ask him how he knows this he will tell you

that he knows it by inward conviction, by that sense of certainty by which the soul apprehends truth, and which, in regard to this truth, we call the full assurance of faith. The only account he can possibly give of this matter from within is that these truths appeal to him with convincing power. As Paul says, "Our Gospel came not unto you in word only" (λογος, argumentative discourse), "but also in power and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance." This inward light and force of truth, which, as we shall see presently, men in all ages have learned to call the power of a Divine spirit, is thus universally necessary for a true living knowledge of God, and hence is an essential element in the process of Divine revelation.

If, however, we turn from this subjective point, and ask for the outward or objective source from which this truth comes to us with convincing power, the answer is, "Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God." Someone by preaching with voice or pen has testified of the Gospel or good news of the grace of God. A spoken or a written Word, passing from man to man, stands out in the history of the case as another important, if not universal, link in God's revelation of Himself to man.

But in Paul's day but very few had heard this spoken or written word. He therefore appeals to another external source from which the truth comes universally to man, set forth in the 19th Psalm, from which he further quotes: "But I

say did they not hear? Yea, verily, 'their sound went out into all the earth, and their words unto the ends of the world.'" This source of truth is God's work in nature. "The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament showeth His handiwork." God's works may immediately awaken our souls to apprehend these convictions of truth by faith; and probably there are few living Christians who have not thus heard God speaking with power to their hearts through nature or through providence.

But if we go back to the spoken or the written Word, and ask whence it comes, we find that it comes from a soul himself possessed of the living knowledge, a soul to whom God has already revealed Himself, and so we travel back to ask for those to whom the Word of God first came; by what means did they first receive the truth and knowledge of God? Here, if anywhere, we shall find special circumstances in the process of revelation, something which may distinguish the revelation as it commonly comes to individual men from the revelation as originally given for the world.

But before carrying our investigation back to the great original epochs of revelation at which new and more perfect knowledge of God has come in for the world at large, we may get some light on the essentials of the process of revelation from the facts now before us in the experience of the individual man. We have seen that such an one knows God not only

through the written or spoken Word, but also by the voices of creation and providence. "The heavens," to each of us, "declare the glory of God, and the firmament showeth His handiwork." There are times when God teaches us knowledge by His chastenings, times when His wonderful dealings with us declare to us His goodness. Now it may be very difficult for us to separate these teachings from the knowledge which has come to us through the testimony of God's written or spoken Word, but the whole teaching of Scripture leads us to the fact that this was one of the ways by which the living word of Divine Knowledge was originally communicated to men.

We have thus arrived at three most important general facts in the process of revelation.

1. In all revelation there is inward apprehension and conviction of truth by living faith.

2. To the great majority of men this comes by a written or spoken Word ministered through human instrumentality.

3. But faith may be and frequently is either originally awakened or greatly strengthened by objective revealing facts. These facts, with the inward convictions, constitute a continuous, and in itself complete chain of revelation by which God makes Himself and His truth known to men. This revelation according to St Paul is sufficient as a basis of universal responsibility.

But in addition to these general facts, there are some other inductions to be gathered from God's

revelation of Himself in the general experience of men.

One of these is its progressive character and its adaptation to our capacity to receive. "When I was a child I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child, but when I became a man I put away childish things;" and so in another chapter, in the same epistle, "I have fed you with milk and not with meat, for hitherto ye were not able to bear it, neither yet now are ye able." This is especially true of the form in which the truth is both presented and received. A man to whom an abstract discourse on the principles of justice would be a sealed book may respond in his inmost conscience to a concrete example or parable such as Nathan used with David.

Again the inward and spiritual nature of faith and its relation to truth as truth enforced by the power of the Divine Spirit renders this truth independent to a large extent of logical processes of argument. It is received by moral and religious intuition. It is also independent of human authority; its authority is Divine and spiritual, *i.e.* productive of inward conviction as truth, and does not rest on human learning or ecclesiastical decree. The man in whose heart true faith is wrought makes no question of the genuineness and authenticity of books, or of the right or authority of a pope, a council, a church, a ministry, or a reformation. He has heard the voice of God, he has been convicted by the Word and the Spirit of truth, and happy indeed is he if

he obeys the Divine call. If he had to wait for the solution of all questions of historical criticism and philosophy before he could believe, he would be exceedingly unfortunate; for in ninety-nine cases out of a hundred he has no capacity for such questions. Our theological sciences go on creating new problems for solution, but the world's true faith goes on its way believing in God and in Christ, and finding everywhere the blessedness and assurance of faith. If the believer is an amateur in theological disputations he may very likely transfer the strong and rightful assurance of his faith to the particular theological opinions which he may have chanced to imbibe, thereby making a very poor theological critic out of a very good Christian, or on the other hand his imperfect and unfortunate attempts at the solution of purely intellectual questions may serve but to confuse his faith, and dull the keenness of his sense of spiritual truth. So Christ says, "I thank Thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that didst hide these things from the wise and understanding, and didst reveal them unto babes." We do not advocate obscurantism, we wish only that these purely intellectual problems should be clearly and for ever separated from the exercise of religious faith.

The Original Revelations of God to Men.

We turn now to the broader question, What has God revealed of Himself to the world at large?

and how has He revealed this knowledge? The answer to these questions will include the content of all revelation of God to individual men, and also the method, in so far as it is a method for the race, and not an accident of the individual. But it may also include special methods by which God has at special epochs enlarged the knowledge of Himself by man, for the benefit of the whole race.

We have already seen in God's revelation of Himself to the individual man the importance and office of the Word, *i.e.* of a body of truth concerning God and His will existing among men, handed down and spread abroad either by writing or by word of mouth, and becoming the instrument by which truth comes to most men for the production of a living faith. We have seen that this word springs out of a living knowledge of God, and tends to create living knowledge of God, as it passes through the ages and generations from heart to heart. We have already seen that this word reached its fulness of grace and truth in Jesus Christ and in the power of the Holy Spirit which according to His promise was given on Pentecost to His disciples. But we have also seen that through prophets and wise men it reached back to the first beginnings of our race. That word is today revealing God, *i.e.* creating living spiritual knowledge of God in the hearts of men beyond all other agencies. It is the world's great interpreter of the voices of Creation and Providence.

It carries the faith and conscience of men up to their most perfect knowledge of faith and duty, and it speaks to that faith and conscience with the supreme authority of eternal truth.

This word has indeed been written in the Book, but it has been re-written in many books. Poets and philosophers, painters and all artists have seized upon its life-giving spirit, have felt its glow in their hearts, and have poured it forth into all new and modern forms of thought and beauty. It speaks not now in Greek and Hebrew alone, but in hundreds of living languages, and in forms of art which transcend all languages, and are read by universal humanity. While expressed in the Book in divinely inspired perfection, its streams have watered all fields of human thought and have enriched all human literature. This Word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever is a spiritual thing, imperfectly grasped by all our thought, imperfectly expressed by all our languages contained but in part by all our books, a treasure in earthen vessels, even when set forth in the thought and words of an inspired apostle. The creation of this word among men is the process of the revelation of God for the world, and the Book is its divinely ordered and completed form.

In historical study there is great advantage in beginning at a point where we are already well informed, and from which we can work back to the more obscure. We shall therefore begin with the Book rather than with the more

obscure beginnings of knowledge of God and religious faith which preceded the Book.

In the Book itself, which is a growth of many centuries, the clearest light shines around Jesus Christ and the Apostolic Age. This has also the advantage of being a point of completeness, both an end and a beginning, the beginning of the great movement of Christian spiritual life the fundamental unit of which we have already described as the revelation of God to the individual man, the end of the progressive process by which our present heritage of religious truth came into possession of our race. Whatever may be the critical questions as to date and authorship of individual books of the New Testament, it is certain that the great movement out of which they sprang and the fundamental ideas which they express date from the first century of our era. The books themselves can none of them be very far removed from this point of origin. They show us clearly that, at that time, not only new forms, but also many new ideas began to take hold of the world's faith, and to spread with amazing rapidity from Jerusalem and Syria far out through the Roman Empire. To any Christian reader of the New Testament there cannot be the slightest doubt as to the nature of this movement. As it is described in the Acts of the Apostles and in the Epistles of St Paul, it is the perfect counterpart of the revelation of God in individual experience which we have already described. It

consisted essentially of deep moral conviction of sin, such as is described in the seventh and preceding chapters of Romans, and of the creation of that faith in God and Christ which is truly called Christian. It was not the creation of a new philosophy or theology, nor yet of a new society or organisation, though both the latter were after results, but it was a planting in the hearts of men of new convictions of duty, of new faith in God as their Father in heaven, and of a new hope of immortality. If we enquire what was the origin of this new faith, we find it commencing from the preaching of a few men who, first at Jerusalem and then in Samaria, Damascus, Antioch, Asia Minor, and so outward, proclaimed to men with wonderful power of inward conviction repentance toward God and faith in the name of Jesus of Nazareth for the forgiveness of their sins. The conviction which accompanied this preaching was an awakening of conscience and an opening of spiritual understanding, like the vision of the ancient prophets, and both preachers and people recognised and spoke of it as the Spirit of God. Further, at the command of the same word in the name of Jesus, diseases were healed and other signs and wonders wrought which made the people still more sensibly recognise the direct presence and power of God. Now what was the significance of these events as a revelation of God?

1. It was perfect revealing of God in the noblest conceptions of His character, His will,

His works, and His relations to man, and this in the hearts and consciences of all who yielded obedience of faith.

2. It was a revelation of God in His attributes of holiness, justice and judgment to still greater numbers who refused to obey this gospel.

3. This revelation was made not as the mere saying or teaching of the preachers, but as an inward conviction of truth, the Divine power of which was still further increased by the signs and wonders which were wrought. This was the power and attestation of the Holy Ghost.

It was during the continuance of this for about the space of two generations that the entire written word contained in the New Testament was produced. The written word was not different from that spoken except in the use of the pen instead of the living voice; it was the same word, whether Paul preached or Paul wrote.

Of these historical phenomena, we have here to note that this was the beginning of a long history in which for nearly nineteen hundred years God has been revealing Himself by the preaching of this gospel and the power of this Spirit among all nations. The continuous history has differed from the first beginning in these respects:

1. The primitive spiritual power has rarely, if ever, been equalled in subsequent times.

2. The subsequent ages have added nothing to the new ideas, the certain knowledge of God and His will which was given at the beginning.

3. The accompanying physical manifestations

have nearly, if not entirely, ceased, and did so about the third generation. Otherwise that which was then a new beginning has become a permanent order, and may be called the usual and, in that sense, the natural method of God's revealing grace.

This Apostolic Age we as Christians recognise as the supreme culmination of God's revelation of Himself to the world. It embraces, like the individual revelation previously considered, an inward revealing of truth to faith and conscience, but accompanied by a Divine spiritual force of conviction surpassing any previous experience of the race. It also resembled the inward revealing of to-day in building upon and enforcing the body of religious truth already in existence, especially that which had been gathered into the Scriptures of the Old Testament. It sometimes even went further and gathered up fragments of elementary truth which lay scattered in the thoughts and literature of the heathen world, showing that its supreme concern was with truth, wherever found and however revealed.

But it went beyond all present and subsequent experience of spiritual illumination in creating an enlarged body of truth, and a body of new truth, first spoken and then written which has ever since constituted for the world a new heritage of religious faith. This new truth was especially associated with the enlarged spiritual illumination and power, which began from Pentecost and has never since been entirely lost in the Church,

and has been so richly renewed during the last two centuries.

It is with this enlarged body of truth that we have now to deal. The supremely significant features in the process of its revelation were two:

1. It was founded in the life, death, and teaching of Jesus of Nazareth. This was the supreme fact by which God was now revealed to the world. "God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish but have everlasting life." This fact places the race in a new relation to God, and reveals to religious faith a new and richer revelation of truth than had ever been given before.

2. The unfolding of this truth to the individual minds of the Church was gradual, and was called out in a natural way by the sequences of history, but under the impulse of a new and living spirit, which began from Pentecost and continued throughout the lifetime of the apostles to unfold the new truth revealed in Christ to its complete fulness. This fulness the Church received, not through one mind or one type of mind alone, but through the ministration of men of various gifts and types of spiritual life, each contributing some distinctive element to the perfect whole. This we may consider, more particularly when we come to study the subject of Inspiration.

Leaving out of sight for the time being the miraculous accompaniments of this Apostolic Age

and postponing for a time the more exact definition of the spiritual illumination of the apostolic writers, we may turn our attention to Jesus of Nazareth as the foundation of the Christian revelation of God. Without His life, work, and teaching neither the illumination of Pentecost nor the apostolic miracles could have advanced the world to this new and more perfect knowledge of God.

Christ Revealing the Father.

What place then does Jesus of Nazareth occupy in the process of Divine revelation?

1. If He were merely an instrument, a teacher or preacher like the apostles themselves, communicating to them with wonderful clearness of vision the new truth which they were to expand, and to carry with the new spiritual light and power to all the world, then the new revelation might have been possible without Him. Even with Him and His teaching, Christianity would have consisted, as some would have us believe it should consist to-day, of a deeper view of the Divine Fatherhood, and of the Sonship of humanity, of the evil and nature of sin, and of a profoundly spiritual as well as world-wide and age-long view of the Kingdom of God in humanity. But we see at once that this is to build a temple with no God within, to create a body without a living soul. If He gave the world the vision of sin as they had never seen it before, it was that He Himself might be the Saviour from sin, offering remission of sins through the sacrifice of Him-

self. If He revealed God the Father, it was that He the only begotten Son might give us rightful power to become the sons of God. If He opened the Divine Kingdom to all believers, it was with Himself as king upon the throne, creating that kingdom by the gift and power of His own spirit, and completing it as judge of all men at last. It is only when our religious faith embraces these elements that we have true Christianity. "Ye believe in God, believe also in Me." "This is eternal life to know Thee, the only true God and Jesus Christ whom Thou hast sent." And so John finished his epistle with the declaration of his personal faith: "We know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding that we know Him that is true, and we are in Him that is true, even in His Son Jesus Christ."

The new faith is thus a faith in Christ as it is in God, "Ye believe in God, believe also in Me"; and the new revelation is a revelation of Jesus Christ as the Son of God. In each individual experience it is not only God revealed to us, but "Christ revealed in us the hope of glory." It is scarcely a step beyond this then for the Church, if not the apostle, to write, "God manifest in the flesh," or "The Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth." "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made

by Him, and without Him was not anything made that hath been made." Christ the Son of God, one with the Father in worship and glory, is thus not a matter of proof text to be found here and there in the New Testament, but is of the very central essence of Christianity as a religious faith. If this be so, then Christ Himself is the supreme revelation of God. "He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father." "No man hath seen God at any time, the only begotten Son (or God) which is in the bosom of the Father, He hath revealed Him." It seems to us that no man can read the New Testament, and doubt that this is its faith and its foundation. "Other foundation can no man lay than that which is laid which is Jesus Christ," so said Paul who was a wise master builder.

We stand thus face to face with the historic fact that in Jesus Christ there burst upon the world a new light, a new revelation, not only from God, but pre-eminently of God. What were the distinguishing characteristics of this supreme revelation of God in Christ?

1. It was a revelation, not only about God and His will, but a personal revelation of God Himself. The religious faith of men recognised not only that "a great prophet is risen up among us," but also that "God hath visited His people." The coming of Christ in our midst brought men more consciously into the presence of God. It was not the word of a messenger telling men of a God afar off, but a spiritual presence which brought us into

sensible touch with the God in whom "we live, move, and have our being." Henceforth the whole body and every individual member would feel that "God is in their midst," that Christ is "with them alway," that they themselves are the "temples of the Holy Ghost." Wherever this man went there was a sense to all but the most hardened, the spiritually blind and deaf, that God was present with them. The lowest acknowledgment of this was, "Never man spake like this man"; a more adequate, though a forced expression was, "We know Thee who Thou art, the Holy One of God"; the true and blessed confession of its truth was, "My Lord and my God."

2. It was a revelation of God in the forms of the most familiar human life. The holiness of God was manifest, not in the unnatural seclusion of a prophet in a cave, or of a priest in the adytum of a temple, or of a celestial emperor unapproachable to common mortal, but of a man who mingled every day with the multitude, a friend even of publicans and sinners, the companion of men in all common daily life, and yet "holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners." The wisdom of God was manifest, not in ambiguous oracles or mysterious philosophy, but in forms of moral and religious truth which appealed to the hearts and consciences of all men, and was expressed in the language of the common people, so that they heard Him gladly. Human learning, science and philosophy, however valuable in themselves, were set aside as unfit for His purpose, and

in the simple parable, the language of nature itself, to simple "babes," He revealed the things which are hidden too often from the wise and prudent, but which give rest to weary souls. The power of God was manifest in things with which all were perfectly familiar, not in plucking the stars from the sky, or rolling back the sun in the heavens or upheaving the foundations of the earth, but in the common wants in which each for himself feels the weight of the hand of the God of nature and providence, in hunger, sickness, and death. And the love of God was manifest in the common pities of a human heart, restoring her son to the widowed and bereaved mother, their child to the stricken parents, a brother to the weeping sisters; but above all, in a charity without show of condescension but full of true brotherly sympathy toward outcast sinners. This, perhaps, was the rarest and most Divine of all. And the infinite sacrifice itself was made in the same human form. He lays down His life by enduring the persecution of sinners. There is at once a Divine simplicity and a perfect humanity in this God-man life of Jesus Christ, which lets us into the deepest secret of how God reveals Himself to men. There is a wonderful unity, a law of ascending series, in this culmination of revelation in the human life of the God man. God begins His revelation of Himself in His works of material creation. There He first reveals the glory of His power and wisdom. He continues

it in a long course of providential government in which He shows forth His righteousness, faithfulness, and truth. And when by this gradual apocalypse He has prepared the world, taught them the A B C of moral and religious truth, then He perfects it in the God man, the Divine humanity, "perfect God and perfect man."

3. Even in this culminating stage of revelation there is a careful adaptation to human capacity. He does not give them that which they were not yet able to bear. In His last discourses He unfolds to them severer trials of their faith of which He says, "These things I said not unto you at the beginning because I was yet with you." And He says of other things, still held in reserve, "I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now"; "Howbeit when He the Spirit of Truth is come, He will guide you into all truth" . . . "for He shall take of mine and shall show it unto you." The law of gradation of revelation to human capacity is a fixed principle of God's method both in nature and grace, and is clearly set forth and fully illustrated within the New Testament itself. It is not after the rough, disjointed manner of a human exoteric and esoteric doctrine, but is a gradual and natural growth into a more and more adequate and so perfect comprehension of truth.

Miracle in Revelation.

We may here pause to consider an important, but still subordinate question, viz., the place of miracle in this process of revelation.

We have called this question subordinate, because if we have properly grasped the deeper meaning of this whole period of revelation, the first and foundation-place in it belongs to Christ, the second to the Spirit, which from Him comes to the hearts of believers, the third to the Word which has been created by that Spirit, and thus the entire process of revelation can be conceived as perfectly possible without physical miracle other than the resurrection from the dead. This fact which the apostles, in their treatment of it, never place with the signs and wonders, is as essential as the incarnation, and, like it, a part of a new law, "Now is Christ risen from the dead and become the first-fruits of them that slept."

But here let me say that we are not now speaking of the supernatural in this revelation. As we have already seen, the supernatural is as necessary as is Christ. But the supernatural is not an incidental circumstance, it is a universal law. All nature was once, *i.e.* at first, supernatural. When God said, "Let there be light," light was supernatural to all pre-existing nature, but henceforth it became a part of that nature, a new order of things; "it became so."

So the incarnation was supernatural, but henceforth He abideth the same for ever. His resurrection was supernatural, but we believe that in Him all shall be made alive, and one day the resurrection life will be the order of the new and glorified nature. The gift of the Spirit on

Pentecost was supernatural, but henceforth it is the universal heritage of the Church. This entire revelation of God, including the new Word which grew out of it, is a supreme addition to the religious truth which man possessed before, and thus is supernatural; over and above what God had previously given, but it is now our permanent New Testament, the order and law and covenant of grace.

But all this might have taken place without even the temporary displacement or disturbance of those minor laws and orders of nature which previously existed, and which in the wisdom of God still continue. But as a matter of fact this was not the case. Signs and wonders did accompany this revelation of Jesus Christ and this gift of Holy Spirit. What was the character of these extraordinary phenomena? What was their function? What part do they fill in the process of Divine revelation?

1. In answering this question we may note some peculiarities of all biblical miracles. They are not sporadic. They cluster around the beginnings of the three great epochs of revelation, the Mosaic, the prophetic and the Christian. They are under a strict law of parcity. They are not called in to solve all difficulties, and never to gratify curiosity. And in the view of the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews they are all wrought by the power of faith, *i.e.* by the superior power of the spiritual as contrasted with the physical nature.

2. These facts link the miracle with the epochs at which we find a marked increment of the gifts of the Divine Spirit. This was clearly true of the Hebrew people, and it may possibly extend to a still wider range. The Christian era and Pentecost, the eighth century B.C. and the prophets, the fourteenth century B.C. and Moses, mark important points in the world's spiritual history. There were doubtless others still beyond, but our records do not reach to them. But it is not difficult to link with the prophetic age such great movements as occurred in the sixth century in China and India, and in the fifth in Greece, and to find almost startling points of resemblance in the genesis of new conceptions of God and of moral and religious truth.

If thus miracles centre around the coming to humanity of a higher power of spiritual vision and life, and if they are a fact associated with the men to whom or through whom this power was given, then they may represent the authority of spirit over matter, and of spiritual law over material law. Rising still higher, as God is a Spirit, the Spirit who both creates and controls all material law, as He is Himself the archetype and foundation of all spiritual law, the presence of miracle is indicative in a peculiar sense of the presence of His Spirit. That which belongs to us in a limited measure, but in an increasing measure, the power as created in the image of God to bend the laws of nature to our will and purposes, belongs to Him in perfect fulness,

and need not be interpreted as an abrogation or contradiction of those laws, but simply as their true nature when brought into contact with higher spiritual power.

But however this may be, it is certain that the obedience of natural forces to the command of spiritual power has a peculiar tendency to arouse the religious sense of God's presence. In this respect it resembles though it far exceeds any unusual display of power in nature. The unusual as well as the supernatural stirs men to see God in His works. They rapidly grow blind to that which is familiar. They forget God in the sunrise and the dew, but perhaps remember Him in the thunderstorm or the earthquake. The earliest revelation of God in His works was to the child eyes of a young world, when all was new and fresh as Eden itself. A dull old world requires signs and wonders. And this brings us very near the scriptural presentation of the function of miracles. They are needful to blind eyes and deaf ears. Hence Christ when about to perform one of His most wonderful works says, "Except ye see signs and wonders ye will not believe." Again to the spiritually blind Jews He says, "If I do not the works of My Father believe Me not. But if I do them though ye believe not Me, believe the works that ye may know and understand that the Father is in Me and I in the Father." Here the faith of receptive souls, those who recognise in the life and words of Christ the truth and

attributes of God, is contrasted with the lower faith of dull souls who must be awakened by mighty signs and wonders before they recognise God in Christ. So again further on He says, "If I had not done among them the works which none other did, they had not had sin; but now they have both seen and hated both Me" (the truth) "and My Father" (whose mighty works I have done). But the first appeal of Christ was ever to the truth. "If I say the truth why do ye not believe Me?" "While ye have the light, believe on the light that ye may become sons of the light." "If ye abide in My word, then are ye truly My disciples, and ye shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free." So in the synoptic gospels, "A wicked and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign," and hence the teaching by parables that the power of spiritual discernment might be tested. Christ's view of miracles is thus perfectly clear. They were not needed to authenticate God's truth but to awaken men from spiritual torpor. And corresponding to this is the teaching of Paul in writing to the Corinthians concerning spiritual gifts, *i.e.* the miraculous accompaniments of the gift of the Holy Ghost, he says, "Tongues are for a sign, not to them that believe, but to them that believe not, but prophesying" (the direct declaration of truth by the light and power of the Spirit), "is for a sign, not to the unbelieving but to them that believe."

The whole tenor of these various passages is

thus to present the miracle, not as the foundation upon which Christ's teaching rests, or upon which the authority of the spirit-given Word rests (that is an idea of later apologists dominated by the formal logic of Aristotle), but as a merciful condescension of God to the dullest souls. "Except ye see signs and wonders ye will not believe." They serve to awaken interest, to fix attention, they almost compel the assent of religious faith, and so prepare the way for that submission of the will to truth which is the essence of probational faith.

It thus follows that the ascription of these works to Satan, when they accompany the proclamation of truth appealing to conscience is the sin against the Holy Ghost. "All their sins shall be forgiven unto the sons of men, and their blasphemies wherewithsoever they blaspheme, but whosoever shall blaspheme against the Holy Ghost hath never forgiveness but is guilty of an eternal sin." This blasphemy was the final rejection of God's loudest call.

On the other hand, the miracle itself must be tested by the character of the teaching. If the doctrine is a doctrine of devils, then the signs and wonders are lying, and themselves the work of the devil. So again Paul, "Whose coming is according to the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders, and with all deceit of unrighteousness for them that are perishing because they receive not the love of the truth that they might be saved."

"And for this cause God sendeth them a working of error that they should believe a lie, that they all might be judged who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness." The scriptural view of the probational function of miracle in the process of God's revelation of His truth to the moral nature of man thus seems perfectly clear.

The Old Testament Revelation.

As might well be expected, the Word created by the supreme revelation of God in Christ takes up into itself all previous revelation and is thus the completed Word. But at least a part of the Word created by previous revelation has come down to us, and is important for various purposes.

1. It enables us to understand the progressive character of the entire process of revelation, and its adaptation to the expanding capacity and wants of the race.

2. It enables us to understand the preparatory character of each successive stage of revelation, and its relation as growing out of all that has gone before so that the whole course of revelation becomes a grand prophetic system, in which there is a constant foreshowing and a definite prophetic faith and hope of good things to come.

3. It has preserved to us many beautiful forms of the Word which were wonderfully fitted to the world's childhood, and which are still unsurpassed for leading the child mind of our

own age up to the full spiritual conceptions of Christianity. This old word has still its manifold uses, though it should never be substituted for the perfected word of the Gospel, as has too often been done in systems of so-called Christian theology, but which might more fitly be called Jewish theology. The new wine must not be put into old bottles nor the new cloth patched on to the old garment.

John the Baptist immediately preceded Christ as the apostles followed Him. He came in the spirit and power of Elijah, *i.e.* to sum up the work of all the prophets, by quickening into intense energy that moral conscience which they had built up through the labour of centuries, and to direct the Messianic hope, which it had been their mission to create, to the definite expectation of immediate fulfilment. "Repent ye for the kingdom of heaven is at hand" was thus the condensed burden of his prophetic ministry. John thus leads us directly into the heart of that prophetic order of which Christ calls him the last and greatest member, yea "more than a prophet" inasmuch as he completed all their work.

This work of the prophetic order from Samuel to Malachi extended over more than seven centuries. The coming of a prophet was not like the coming of Christ Himself, a revealing event in the world's history, nor were they always as Moses, Abraham and Noah, great actors in the events of revealing history. They were rather

the interpreters of the events as revealing the will of God. Sometimes they did little more than record the history in the religious spirit. Through them the word of the Lord came out of the history to the nation. Their position and work was thus exactly parallel to that of the apostles and prophetic men of the New Testament. These too were sometimes little more than recorders of the facts by which God was revealed in Christ. So the prophets in olden time out of the events of preceding or contemporary history proclaimed the Word of the Lord to the people of their age. The close relation of their work to its historic setting is its most marked characteristic. Sometimes the illuminating spirit enabled them to anticipate coming events. It certainly gave them a grand far-reaching foresight of the Messianic kingdom, but all this grew out of the real historic and religious life of their own time.

In the prophetic age then, revealing facts are just as fundamental and important as they are in the Christian. Here too they are accompanied by and interpreted by the illuminating spirit given to chosen men, and thus result in the word of the Lord for all the people.

There is no doubt that the revealing history which they interpreted was itself special, and at least providential. It was a line of history ordered of God for the purpose of making Himself known to men. It was paralleled by other lines of history, also we believe providential

and ordered for the material civilization, for the political development, and for the intellectual perfection of the race. But this was peculiarly religious, the history by which God was made known. But it was not on that account like the incarnation entirely supernatural. It was rather, and in this lies its peculiar interest, the revelation of God in common human history. Although the ordered line was special, the events which filled it up were the facts of our common human life; and the prophetic interpretation of these, as revealing the will of God for the time then present as well as the great purpose of God for the future, created a Divine word full of interest and lessons of instruction for all time.

Considered as a part of Divine revelation, the great distinguishing characteristic of the prophetic age is the Messianic hope. Side by side with this is the unfolding of the ethical ideals of religion and of its universal spirit. This last is something quite different from the development of a tribal monotheism into a universal religion. A tribal religion acknowledged gods many, and was essentially local and materialized in its conception. The prophets, on the other hand, from the beginning believed in a spiritual God, the only living and true God, the maker of heaven and earth. In the earlier stages they may have regarded Him as looking with disfavour upon the mass of the heathen given over to the worship of idols, or with more peculiar favour upon Israel,

the people who knew His name. But the universal spirit which rapidly grew up among them was the more generous faith that all the people of the earth have an interest in the heart and purpose of the living and true God. And as the brightness of the Messianic hope increased with successive generations, while it illuminated Mount Zion, its light reached to all the ends of the earth. Zion was the world's religious centre, and when her light should come it was to shine for all the nations.

1. The entire field of revelation in this age embraced two other aspects besides the more distinctly prophetic. One was priestly and more distinctly personal and practical in its character. It wrote history from the human and legal standpoint, and poetry out of national experience, each of them forming a word of God for the people.

2. The other aspect was ethical, intuitional and reflective, the work of the wise men, the only attempt at a Hebrew philosophy. The Hebrew teachers were accustomed to separate these religious writings from those of Moses and the prophets, as being the result of a lower illumination; but no parts of the Old Testament Word have appealed more powerfully to the religious heart of humanity than many of these ancient hymns and prayers. And there can be little doubt that the faith of the Church that these too were created by the aid of the interpreting Spirit is well founded, and that thus they also are a true Word of God to men. They also

agree with prophecy in all growing out of the revealing facts of our common human life, and they touch in a peculiar way its most human sides, reaching down even to the proprieties and prudential maxims of daily common duties and courtesies. They leave nothing outside the scope of that religion which sanctifies our daily meals, and blesses our downsitting and uprising, and places God at our right hand in all our ways.

Our next step in moving back along the line of Divine revelation we may designate as *Institutional*, the great work of Moses. In studying this it is quite unnecessary to enter into the mazes of the Higher Criticism as to the authorship of the Pentateuch in whole or in part. We need for our purpose the admission of but a few general facts which we think will not be seriously called in question. The whole Hebrew tradition as preserved in the Old Testament and all later writings is so consistently and uniformly witness to the fact that Moses laid the broad foundations of the Hebrew civil and religious institutions, that this can scarcely be doubted. That these subsequently passed through the ordinary process of historic evolution may be granted, and the precise extent and course of that evolution may be matter of investigation; but this can scarcely affect the relation of the main fact to the general process of Divine revelation. This fact is put before us in the New Testament very tersely thus: "The law was given by Moses." The colossal grandeur with which Moses stands out in all after history is proof

positive that he is not a myth, or the insignificant author of a few brief precepts. He at least laid a foundation of law and institutions of religion of sufficient strength and vitality that it was able to produce and sustain the entire fabric as we know it to-day in the Pentateuch. This work the Hebrew people recognized as the most important and fundamental part of the Divine revelation given to their nation. "We know that God spake by Moses" was an unquestional article of their religious faith. This brings before us a new phase of the process of Divine revelation, God revealing His will in the foundation of nations with their laws and institutions. It is not necessary to enter minutely either into the human side or the Divine side of the process by which this was accomplished. The faith of the nation was clear that the illuminating wisdom from which the law was given was the gift of God, the inspiration of His Holy Spirit; and that the resulting body of law was of Divine as well as of human authority, binding not merely as the will of the nation, but as the will of God. But it is distinguished from the prophetic Word as the statutes, the precepts, the judgments of Jehovah, and constitutes the foundation upon which the prophetic Word was built.

Such a religious faith in the Divine authority of their law was by no means confined to the Hebrew people. Other nations also believed that their national foundations and institutions were from God. Nor is it necessary to regard

such a faith as absurd or a delusion. In the moral content of all law we should hear the voice of God, and so Paul acknowledges when to the Romans the masters of jurisprudence, he writes, "There is no power but of God, and the powers that be are ordained of God." We may refuse to interpret literally the mythical form in which this faith has often been expressed, and yet acknowledge the validity of the faith. Nor is it necessary, on the other hand, to depreciate the Hebrew law as if it were no better than that of other nations. But its superior excellency lies not in some accidental manner of its communication by miraculous agency, but in its moral character. In so far as that moral character is shared by the laws of other nations, they too were doubtless given by God to make the world better. The wisdom by which they commanded wise and righteous conduct may be recognised as a special gift of God to each nation. On the other hand, the imperfection of their justice and sometimes the deviating from justice and purity which marks them, show clearly that the human entered largely into their origin. Nor can this be altogether denied of the Hebrew law. Our Lord Himself points out at least one instance in which this accommodation to the moral imperfection of humanity made the law of Moses less than perfect. But all this does not contravene the fact that, in the Mosaic institutions there is an illumination of the Divine Spirit as much beyond that of other nations as they are superior to them

in the moral and religious teaching of their prophetic order. But we should miss the full measure of the Divinity of the Mosaic institutions if we overlooked their foundation in revealing facts of a special and even supernatural character. The great revealing event was the deliverance of Israel from the bondage of Egypt and their planting in the land of Canaan. In this work the presence of God was most emphatically manifested to religious faith. The memory of this period kept that faith alive for long centuries. And the events of the period are not merely extraordinary and special providences, but must be regarded as at least in part supernatural. Miracle here is not simply an attestation of Moses and his mission, but is a part of the revealing history which placed this people in a new and special relation to the living and true God. Out of this new relation grew their laws and institutions, embodying a Divine purpose to be wrought out through this people for the benefit of the whole world. To them were thus committed the oracles of God, and from them the Divine kingdom of truth and righteousness was to go forth to all the earth. These important facts differentiate the Hebrew law from all other national foundations; and while their intellectual conception of the facts was still imperfect, their religious faith grasped the reality of the case. So the Psalmist says truly, "He hath not dealt so with any nation, and as for His judgments they have not known them." In thus briefly sketching in broad outline the process and

method of God's revelation of Himself to men, it is impossible to enter into details of the Mosaic period of revelation. It must suffice to say that it laid the foundations of national and institutional religion and morality, upon which the subsequent religious work of prophets, priests and wise men was built. In the Old Testament of to-day we perhaps have not a minute detailed chronological history of the entire process, though we doubtless have the main outlines of such history sufficiently well preserved. But we have without doubt an accurate portraiture of the whole result as a creation of religious life and faith from Moses to Malachi. And this religious life and faith, while but preparatory to better things to come, is not unworthy of God as its author or of Christ as coming to build upon it the perfect revelation of God.

But this faith itself carries us back to a still more remote period in the process of Divine revelation, a period of which we have but the most fragmentary records. Before Moses, God was known in the world, and was worshipped by the fathers of the Hebrew people in forms suitable to their primitive life. The origin of these forms it is now perhaps impossible to trace. The Hebrew tradition makes no attempt to account for them. In the book of Genesis (origins) we have a collection of the Hebrew form of these oldest traditions, but they all take for granted as already existing a knowledge of God, and of moral principles, and of prayer

and sacrificial worship. But while they thus do not profess to describe the very beginning of religion in the history of the race, they do present to us traditions of important religious origins which are worthy of examination. In entering this period of tradition, we at once miss familiar forms which have been present with us up to this point. We have here no definite ministerial order of apostle or prophet, such as we can trace almost continuously from Moses to St John. We have no written word such as is supposed from Moses onward. The revelation of God exists as a family tradition, and the institutions of religion as a part of family life. At this point the ancient Hebrews were in this feature less advanced than some of their neighbours, the Egyptians, the Babylonians, and others eastward. But as we gather up the knowledge of God and the type of moral life which appears in these few scattered family traditions from Abraham to Moses, we find it singularly pure both as moral and religious truth. While it strikes us as less developed than the religions of the more advanced nations, it is certainly not affected as they have been by mythical degeneration and moral corruption. It also maintains, as no contemporary religion does, the fundamental element of all religion, conscious inward communion with God. The revealing events here are less striking, *i.e.* they involve less of the supernatural, and are more in the line of God's ordinary providence as toward men. The striking thing, the supernatural

thing, is the conscious intercourse of these men with God. The traditions have given us but little intimation of the manner of this communion. The facts only are recorded in the most direct terms such as, "The Lord had said unto Abraham," "The Lord appeared unto Abraham," etc. Once there is an extended vision, at another three men appear; but under all, the important fact is personal communion with God, a personal cognizance of the presence and will of God. The simple patriarchal lines of such men as Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, even though marked by here and there a moral blemish, still exhibit a remarkable type of lofty and even heroic faith in God, and a pattern of family religion rare even in far more advanced ages. It is out of this personal character and family religion that there arise the national institutions and the remarkable religious development of the future. But this Hebrew book of Origins preserves not only these oldest family traditions, but also a group of traditions which carry us out beyond the limits of even traditional history. These consist of broadly generalized accounts of Creation, of the beginning of human development, the origin and spread of sin, the peopling of the earth, the destruction of the race by a deluge, the variation of language, and the origin of nations. These are all treated from a religious point of view, *i.e.* are works of God and orderings or judgments of His providence. It is impossible to describe these ancient compositions by any one literary term. They are not

myths, and they are not properly historic traditions. How they were collected in their present form in the book of Genesis it is perhaps impossible now to determine. We know certainly that they existed, many of them at least, in other forms and among other peoples, and had been already reduced to writing before the time of Moses. We know, too, that in the process of the formation of the inspired Word, as we have briefly sketched it, they were collected and cast into their present form and placed in the forefront of the volume which presents to us the content of ancient revelation, and is its written word. They are thus made by the men whose office it was by voice or pen to deliver the Word to the nation, an integral part of that word; and their whole internal content and teaching, not as science, history, or philosophy, but as a presentation of religious truth, proves that they are neither an unworthy nor an unimportant part of that word. We have doubtless misinterpreted these early documents; we have in our blind zeal arrayed them against science and philosophy and history, and have read into them what they were never intended to say. We have failed to understand their poetical imagery, their deep intuitive views of nature and of man, their profoundly religious sense of the presence of God in all nature and all history, their dim traditional memories of far-off events lying beyond the range of either history or tradition; and so have set them in conflict with almost every department

of modern science or historical or archæological research. And then still more we have tried to heal the breach by the most awkward and puerile of reconciliations, true neither to Genesis nor yet to science. But these ancient documents set us out on the very forefront of the process of revelation. They gather up for us all the great revealing facts of prehistoric time. These facts are many of them either world-wide or age-long in their significance, and also in their continuous moral and religious effects; such as Creation, man, moral nature, the family, religious worship, labour, sin, suffering and death, personal communion with God, the growth of arts, the growth of nations, the divergence of languages, the mysterious lives of Enoch and Noah, leaving an indelible impress on the world's memory. But in them all we have read to us the primitive revelation of God to man, and it has cast the whole into forms of which the world, and especially the world's child-mind, has never grown weary. To some of these we shall return again in our exposition of Christian doctrine, and shall then endeavour to set forth what we conceive to be their true meaning as parts of the Word of ancient revelation. Here we need only say that this book itself, side by side with our studies in Anthropology and Comparative Religion, carries us back to the primitive revelation of God, by which man came first to know God, and to give Him a name, and to discern the right, and to be conscious of sin, and to lay hold of a hope of salvation. This

book of origins tells us, as all our modern scientific studies tell us, and as St Paul has said, that the beginning of all revelation is in God's work in nature, "That the invisible things of God from the creation of the world, are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead."

From this brief review we may understand something of the unity and simplicity of God's method of revelation. Its foundation is laid in creation itself, as all creation reveals the Creator, and in man's capacity to know God in His works. In these God has been no respecter of persons. "Their line has gone out into all the earth, and their words unto the end of the world." But from this universal foundation the great law of spiritual evolution has held, "Unto him that hath shall be given, and he shall have more abundantly." This law of evolution leads us to a family, a nation, and a line of history in which God has been revealed, constituting them for this purpose a chosen people. In this line of evolution (*apocalypsis* St Paul calls it) there have appeared great epochs of the incoming of new and higher spiritual life, which finally culminate in the revelation of God in the face of His Son Jesus Christ our Lord, through whose offering of Himself a sinful world may be reconciled, *i.e.* brought back to the Father's house, and a kingdom of universal truth and righteousness and peace with God established over the hearts of all men.

Thus this, like all the works and ways of God, is moving onward and upward through all the ages to the perfect glory of moral and spiritual perfection. This law of spiritual evolution seems to lie in the deepest nature of all intellectual, moral, and religious life. That life to be truly bestowed upon us cannot be imposed from without, it must be created by living growth from within. Only thus does it become an added power of life, fruitful for its own enlargement. To this law God's revelation has strictly conformed, each new stage appearing only in "the fulness of time." And the law of prophetic outlook which has governed it in all the past has not yet ceased to operate, for there is a glory of God "yet to be revealed," and its coming in will be hastened as the present revelation has its perfect work in the life of humanity.

CHAPTER III

THE WORD, ITS NATURE AND FUNCTION

IN our review of the process of revelation we have seen that from the time of Moses the Divine revelation has taken permanent form as a spoken or written Word. We have first the Law, then the prophetic Word, then the Word of prayer, praise, and wisdom, and finally the Gospel. This Word is in no way a mere history of the facts by which God is revealed, or of the process of revelation. It does to some extent embody the facts, presenting them as they were present to the observation or memory of men in its successive ages, and from it we may collect materials very valuable for the reconstruction of what has been called Scripture history. Throughout the greater part of this written Word the idea of history is altogether apart from the purpose or thoughts of the writers. And even where, as in the Gospels and Acts and some of the Old Testament books, the writer is consciously narrating facts, he arranges them not always chronologically, but often topically, as in the Gospel collections of our Lord's miracles, parables, and didactic discourses. The Word thus embodies facts and presents us with facts, but it does so as the basis of religious faith; and the

presentation is not to the historic imagination, to construct a perfect picture of the life and times, nor yet to the interest of the scientific historian, to trace the orderly sequence of events as they arise one from another, but a presentation of each fact to religious faith, as setting forth the power or the wisdom, the justice or the goodness, the character and the will of the great God who ruleth over all. In dealing with these facts it appears that the writers of the Word accepted the accredited human history of their time or the commonly known facts of their time, or the facts of nature as apprehended in the existing state of human knowledge, making no attempt to forestall historic criticism or scientific discovery by supernatural means. The message of the Word was a message from God concerning faith and duty; and while that message was founded on real facts of nature and history and human life, it dealt with those facts as known and read by all men; and its supreme business was with their interpretation as revealing God.

The Word is thus the world's interpreter of the facts by which God is revealed to men, not to reason, or to science, or to the historic imagination, but to religious faith. It takes those facts as they appear to and are known by the people of each successive age to which it speaks. In each age it appears to speak of those facts according to the manner of the people, *i.e.* in the accredited historic and scientific conceptions of its own time. Only thus could it fulfil its mission, which was to make

known God's will to all the people. Had it, for instance, in the first of Genesis forestalled the teachings of our geology, it would have remained a sealed book until the middle or end of the nineteenth century, and by the end of the twentieth would doubtless have been obsolete and discredited as well. Even to-day it would have been Greek to our children and to all but the men of the Schools. With a message for all men it must take the facts as they are known and read of all men, and from them set forth God's Word to the hearts and consciences of all the people.

For this function of the Word but two things are necessary: first, that the facts are real; secondly, that they are rightly interpreted. A defect on either of these points converts religious faith into superstition. True religious faith must rest on truth, truth in fact, and truth in its religious interpretation. The scientific conception may be a matter of minor importance in this regard. The progress of the sun through the heavens is a great fact, known and observed in all the ages. This fact is beautifully interpreted in the nineteenth Psalm: "The heavens declare the glory of God and the firmament sheweth His handiwork." The form of scientific conception, *i.e.* the form in which the fact is held before the thought of the writer, is that familiar in that age, the firmament or solid canopy or tent in which the sun takes his daily journey from east to west, shedding light and heat, and showing

forth the goodness and power of his Creator. If, on the other hand, we conceive of this same fact as the earth ever turning from the darkness to the great source of light and heat which God hath established, is the old time lesson to religious faith either falsified or minified in its beauty and truth. Indeed the forms under which the race first conceived of the world's great facts have the advantage of being the simplest and most obvious, and hence the easiest to the great majority of men, and especially to children in all ages. The only fatal mistake is in setting them in array against advancing science, or in a supercilious science despising their religious significance. These principles do not apply with the same force and to the same extent to the results of modern historical criticism. All must admit that reasonable historical accuracy is necessary, if our religion is to be founded on fact. But on the other hand the lessons to be drawn from these facts lie in their broad characteristic outlines, and not in some minute circumstance which must be carefully elucidated by critical investigation. The accredited historic knowledge of the people, especially in the Old Testament, and their historic traditions appear to be sufficiently accurate for the purposes of the word, *i.e.* they are substantially true historic facts. We may even go a step further and recognise that the Old Testament uses poetic imagery and license in the religious interpretation of its ancient history. The parable and

allegory are also familiar forms for the interpretation of its religious ideas. But on the other hand we think that its poetic license never degenerates into legend, nor does its parable or allegory or symbolism become mere myth. The earnest, truth-loving, reverent spirit has, we think, everywhere clearly drawn the line which separates the degenerate and superstitious tendency of other religions from the free yet legitimate poetic beauty of the Old Testament religious spirit. But beyond this general conviction of trustworthiness we think it quite unnecessary to dogmatize in regard to the inerrancy of the Old Testament. We may quite safely allow reverent and truth-loving biblical critics to press their investigations with scientific fidelity to all facts, and we think there is not the slightest reason to fear that any trustworthy results, finally arrived at, will diminish aught from the moral and religious value of the Old Testament. The links which bind it to Christianity are not the precise date of any particular event, or the authorship, date or original form or editorial recasting of any particular book, but the fundamental truth which is embodied in the books themselves, and which cannot be eliminated by any results of criticism. The Old Testament as we now have it certainly existed before Christ came; and the moral and religious development which it contains and which prepared the way for Him certainly existed; and from this preparatory work of the law and the prophets as its founda-

tion, Christianity proceeded to build a new faith in Christ Jesus as the world's final revelation of God. And the demonstration for this faith is that He fulfils, *i.e.* completes all its moral and religious ideas, carrying them out to their full perfection, and satisfies all that its promises had held forth to the world's religious faith; and this He does not in a material and earthly sense, but in a Divine and spiritual. But when we come to the New Testament Word the relation of minute historical verity to our religious faith becomes much more vital. Christianity is essentially a religious faith founded on the facts of Christ's life, death and resurrection; and if these are not facts, then, as Paul says, our "faith is vain." If our gospels are the result of a legendary or a mythical development, or of any other process by which facts have been really falsified, then are we indeed building religious faith upon a false foundation, not upon facts, but upon fictions; and, thus far, our faith is not a true religious faith but a superstition.

But even this does not imply a miraculous verbal inerrancy, but such a truthful record or faithful portrait as an honest mind, quickened to its very best in memory by the deepest religious interest and sympathy, would furnish. Perhaps a portrait more nearly expresses the character of our gospel records than the word history. But in either case, there is required fidelity to facts. The fundamental question thus centres around the

gospel record, including the Acts. The detailed investigation of this question belongs to the department of Biblical Criticism and Introduction, rather than to theology proper, and with that we shall not intermeddle. The business of theology is with certain general principles which are really matters of religious faith, and denial of which has originated almost all attacks upon the authenticity of the Gospels both in primitive and in modern times. If a denial of the possibility of the supernatural is accepted as a fundamental and universal axiom of criticism, then no weight of evidence can establish the authenticity of the Gospels, for they are essentially a record throughout of the doings and sayings of a supernatural being.

On the other hand, apart from some such critical canon or presupposition, all external and collateral evidence favours the authenticity of the Gospel history. All references to the life and work of Christ and to the work of the apostles, to be met with in the sacred or profane writers of the first three centuries are in harmony with the records of the Gospels and Acts. If it be said that they are so because they are derived from these sources, then we are face to face with the fact, that from the generation next following the events, neither the Church nor the outside world knew any source of information differing from our Gospels. We can trace the books themselves recognised as authority in the Church back to the middle of the second century, and there coming out of the time

beyond. Between that and the middle of the first century, when they began to be written, we have within the New Testament collection, and in outside ecclesiastical and secular literature, a considerable number of references to the facts which they record, every one of which is in harmony with the Gospel records. If you say these are mere repetitions from the Gospels, then they recognise the Gospels as historic authority back to the time of men who were contemporaries and eye-witnesses of the events. If you regard them as independent traditions or memories, then they (such as Paul's attestation of the resurrection), constitute a strong body of corroborating evidence. Again, these records agree with each other in a remarkable manner, which involves independency of testimony as well as substantial unity of truth. There is thus no ground in the nature of the testimony unfavourable to the authenticity of the record; but, on the other hand, the burden of proof is thrown on the objector. Here are four witnesses, two of them eye-witnesses, corroborated by all contemporary history and literature. Here are five books, the existence and acceptance of which can be traced back to the lifetime of men who conversed with the reputed authors. Some valid reason must be given to prove that such testimony is false, and some at least reasonable theory must be advanced to show how such testimony could exist and obtain currency, and yet be false.

The standing objection to the authenticity of the Gospels for the last two or three centuries is

that a miracle cannot possibly be true, is in itself such a violation of the order of nature as no intelligent man can credit.

Let it be noticed that this is first of all a modern objection. In the ages beyond, the religious faith of men was too deep to accept such a principle. It belongs peculiarly to the modern age.

Again, it is an objection not founded on reason, or upon our sense of moral truth, but upon human experience, *i.e.* observation. This takes it for granted that our observation or experience is the measure of all possibility and reality. The wider range of science which is now opened up to us in the modern doctrine of evolution, sets this quite aside as a quasi-scientific objection. We know now that again and again in the process of the universe, things have appeared in the world of which there was no previous experience, and that their appearance involved no suspension or abrogation of pre-existing laws of nature, but only the introduction of new forces, and new laws, and a higher order of being. Even within a narrower range, advancing science makes us familiar with things which fifty years ago would have been miracles of the first order. Now they are matters of every day occurrence, and how? Not by the suspension of nature's laws, but by the incoming of new intelligence, *i.e.* higher spiritual law. And so here, a hundred years ago, theologians talked of the suspension of nature's laws, and scientists denied that such was possible. To-day a wiser science and a wiser theology may both admit

that there are still more things in heaven and earth than we know, and that what we call miracle is simply the presence of a higher and hitherto unknown power. To-day true science will candidly and honestly investigate the facts, and form no *a priori* conclusions. True science is too modest, and has too deep a reverence for the infinite and unexplored ocean of truth which still lies before her, to make any hasty assertions as to what cannot be.

We might rest our investigation of the credibility of the Gospel record concerning Christ here, and say that sustained as it is by internal and external evidence, and assailed only on the basis of an unfounded assumption, we may confidently accept its testimony as the basis of our religious faith. But the utter weakness of the assault appears when we come to examine the theories which in our time have been advanced to account for the existence of the Gospels and of their testimony. These are three in number, each one excluding and overturning the other two. They are the mythical theory of Strauss, the legendary theory of Renan, and the tendency theory of Bauer. We pause for a moment to examine these, because each involves an important factor in the development of religious ideas in human history; and it becomes important that we should understand the distinction between such development, and the formation of the Word of God as presented in the Gospels.

The myth is a peculiar product of the human mind. It finds its basis in facts of nature or of history; in this it agrees with the religious intuition. But instead of seeing in them the forces of purely spiritual and moral being, working out purposes of moral and Divine significance, it but dimly apprehends these, and by the help of the imagination reconstructs the action or fact in a supernatural form. We have already seen the results of the development of the religious spirit through myth. There is a gradual degeneration, as the imagination is influenced by immoral, capricious, and grotesque associations, and the reverence, the seriousness and the purity of the religious spirit is lost. Strauss's work was an effort to exhibit the Gospel narratives as a product of this process. It is a failure in the following aspects:

1. It fails to find natural circumstances or events which can with any show of plausibility be presented as the basis of the Gospel narratives.

2. The narratives themselves refuse to conform to any of the types to be found in the realm of myth. There is no play of the imagination, no introduction of the lower human passions, no sacrifice of moral and spiritual ideals. On the other hand, these narratives exhibit the highest type of moral and spiritual ideal that the mind of man has ever conceived.

3. There is an utter failure to show that this

was an age, and that there existed the circumstances in which alone the myth is possible. For the formation of the myth the poetic fancy must be active, the fundamental beliefs which are embodied in the myth must be well established, the critical faculty must be dormant, in fact the whole situation must be that which favours the indulgence of beautiful and pleasant day-dreams. On the other hand, these Gospel stories are utterly without the exuberance of poetic fancy; there is no attempt at embellishment or at a magnifying of the wonderful; the fundamental belief, viz., that this young carpenter of Galilee was a supernatural person, had itself to be created out of the most unpromising material; and finally the age and circumstances were those of the hardest and most prosaic form of human life at the furthest possible remove from the golden age of myths. The mythical theory of the Gospels has now virtually disappeared.

As the myth is the product of an age of active imagination the legend is the product of an age of ignorance and credulity. It is the gradual growth by accretion, exaggeration, and distortion of a story which finally emerges as the supernatural. It requires time as well as darkness. The real facts must grow dim, and their original witnesses disappear, and step by step the picture be changed till the supernatural, or rather the unnatural, is evolved. Here again the essential conditions are lacking.

1. The time is insufficient. Ten years could

not under the most favourable circumstances produce such an extensive and self-consistent body of legend.

2. The persons and conditions are utterly impossible. Paul was neither a fool nor a knave, not an ignorant man, nor a willing and receptive believer. The first audiences of the Christian preachers were largely and bitterly hostile. The first preachers themselves were critically examined, and tried before hostile and able tribunals, and repeatedly sent to prison, and some of them to death for their testimony. The whole age, in fact, was critical towards them, and the circumstances were such that hostile criticism could not be avoided.

3. The product is not the product of the legendary process. It is not a disjointed, irrational, unnatural story; the human life is common, reasonable, natural life, and the Divine presence is at once self-consistent and presents the highest of all ideals of Divinity. The religious spirit is not that of the blind devotee, but is at once most natural and reasonable and pure. The legendary theory has thus, like the mythical, passed away in a single lifetime, and is now remembered as one of the curiosities of literature.

On the other hand, some fragments of Bauer's tendency theory still remain with us. It differs from the other two, in that it implies intelligence of a highly developed character, and hence a conscious or semi-conscious falsification of facts for a

definite purpose. That purpose is the support of the dogmas of a religious or theological party. There are two or more parties in the Church. Each has its own doctrine, *i.e.* peculiar view of the person and work of Christ; and each so pictures the facts as to support its own view. Bauer at first applied his theory to the Acts of the Apostles, but later on it was extended over the greater part of the New Testament. The genuineness of four books was admitted, viz., the Epistles to the Romans, I. and II. Corinthians, and Galatians. Fortunately these four epistles embody the most important supernatural facts of Christianity. Christ is in them the Son of God; His death is the atonement for the world's sin; His authority is supreme and His kingdom divine; and all is attested by the greatest of all miracles, the resurrection from the dead. Now all this was written within twenty-five years after the crucifixion, the resurrection and the Pentecost. It was written while the supernatural gifts of the Spirit were still common in the Church, and were even subject to unseemly misuse. It was written while the greater part of the witnesses of the resurrection were yet alive. Could falsification in the face of contending parties have been possible under such circumstances? If Paul exaggerated or falsified his facts, he must have been instantly detected and exposed. In an age and amongst a people sufficiently advanced to form dogmatic parties and to write books against each other, legend is impossible, and myth is im-

possible, and any serious falsification of fact for the purposes of argument is impossible. There can be no doubt that the school of Bauer has vastly exaggerated the party strife of the apostolic age and its influence on the contents of the New Testament. But that such parties did exist, and that, owing to their existence, religious faith even in the New Testament advanced to the dogmatic form, and that this influenced such epistles as Romans and Galatians, and even the Epistles to the Corinthians, is doubtless true. But the very certainty of this is our guarantee for the fidelity with which the main facts of Christianity must have been transmitted to our time. Whatever tendency there may have been on the part of either party to exaggerate or falsify is more than counteracted by the critical watchfulness of their opponents.

The various attacks upon the authenticity of the documents which furnish us with the history of the founding of Christianity, or rather with its foundation facts, thus all fall to the ground, and we may rest satisfied that in the gospels and Acts we have the essential facts upon which the religious faith of Christianity was built. Has tradition added anything to these facts? We may safely answer absolutely nothing. The Apocryphal gospels and so-called apostolic traditions are the veriest trash, bearing on their face all the marks of legend, or pure fiction or clumsy myth. Even genuine documents of sub-apostolic age add not a single element of fact or doctrine. In the New

Testament alone we find the basis of all Christian doctrine, the facts by which God is revealed in Jesus Christ.

But in the New Testament we have not merely the authentic statement of revealing facts, but still further the interpretation of those facts as a religious faith. We may even add that, under the influence of controversy, this religious faith to some extent becomes clearly and consciously defined as dogma or doctrine.

It is, however, characteristic of the New Testament, and in fact of the whole scripture, that it is essentially religious faith, rather than intellectual dogma on religious subjects. The gradual growth of dogma is chiefly a matter of ecclesiastical history; the interest of the New Testament centres around the living religious faith in Jesus Christ. As we have already seen, this new faith was not the mere product of man's religious nature called into exercise by the supernatural facts. It was the product of a supernatural illumination within, as well as of supernatural facts without. To the nature and results of this supernatural illumination we must next turn our attention.

CHAPTER IV

THE INSPIRATION OF SCRIPTURE

THE Word of God, whether spoken or written, has in all ages been the instrument by which living faith has been created in the hearts of men. In this work it has been found to be not an ordinary means of instruction or teaching, but accompanied by a special enlightening power, which quickens the moral and religious nature of man, and even stimulates his intellect, so that he apprehends its truth with an irresistible force of conviction. This Divine power accompanying the Word has been manifest in the whole course of the history of the Church. It was the case in the apostolic age. Paul says, "Our gospel came not unto you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance." So of the preaching of Peter, it is said, "While Peter yet spake these words the Holy Ghost fell on them which heard the word." And just after Pentecost itself, as Peter was preaching the word, it is said, "When they heard this they were pricked in their hearts, and said unto Peter and the rest of the apostles, Brethren, what shall we do?" In virtue of this Divine power the word is called "the sword of the Spirit," and is de-

scribed in these words, "Every scripture inspired of God is also profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for instruction which is in righteousness; that the man of God may be complete, furnished completely unto every good work;" and yet again thus, "The Word of God is living and active, and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing even to the dividing of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and quick to discern the thoughts and intents of the heart." It is even spoken of as possessing sanctifying and regenerating power, as in Peter, "Having been begotten again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, through the Word of God which liveth and abideth;" and so also Christ, "Sanctify them in the truth: Thy Word is truth." Nor is this Divine power of the Word confined to the apostolic age or to apostolic men alone. It is the experience of the living Church in all the ages and, we may say with humility and gratitude, of our own time. The Word still creates living faith by the power of the Holy Spirit. This experience of a Divine convincing and enlightening power accompanying the Word goes hand in hand with the faith of the Church, that the word itself was originally created in the minds or on the lips of the men to whom it first came by a still greater energy of the same Spirit. In fact this belief in the Divine inspiration of the Word is so universal, so strongly imbedded in the religious faith of the Christian world, that the tendency is to an exaggerated conception of its method of

working. We may boldly assert that no man who has entered into the full measure of Christian experience is without this faith. His daily experience of communion with God through the Word keeps this faith alive in full energy. And this very prominence and importance of this faith as an element of our entire religious life, as leading us continually to feed that life "on the sincere milk of the word that we may grow thereby," makes it most important for the true understanding and profitable use of the Word that our faith in the inspiration of the Word should be an intelligent faith, founded on truth and fact, and not on some blind or even traditional misconception.

It does not need lengthy argument to prove that as the Word is now received and becomes a living faith by the power of the Holy Spirit, so it was originally created by the same power. All Christians at least will probably admit this; and with those who are not Christians in the true inward sense, it would be perhaps useless to begin by a discussion of this point. A mere dogma of infallible inspiration would not, as we have already seen, compel a living faith; and when the truth has once entered and begins to work with its own Divine power of conviction, the acknowledgment of its Divine origin will speedily follow. As Paul says, "If there come in one unbelieving, he is convicted by all, he is judged by all; the secrets of his heart are made manifest; and so he will fall down on his face and worship God, declaring that God is among you indeed."

The questions which demand consideration are these :—

1. What is the nature or method of this Divine influence? or, at least, what was its effect upon the minds of the first preachers and writers of the Word.

2. What are the permanent qualities which have been thereby communicated to the Word itself?

In other words, inspiration is a subjective influence on the minds of the sacred writers, and is an objective quality of the Word. It is evident that these important questions cannot be answered from any *a priori* considerations. Our judgment or religious zeal can by no means determine God's method of teaching men His truth. This is a question which can only be answered by an appeal to facts, and these facts are to-day only to be found in the Word itself. Neither the antecedent Rabbinical opinions on the subject, nor the subsequent Patristic conceptions, can give us authoritative guidance. In fact these are as divergent among themselves as are the opinions of our own time; and besides are expressed so largely in figurative language, that they can scarcely be quoted for exact definition. They are the language often of an earnest religious faith, rather than of a clearly defined and carefully formed theological opinion. But it may be asked, why go beyond the expression of strong religious faith? The answer is that this faith is fundamental, inasmuch as it must govern all our use and understanding of the

Word of God. It must, therefore, be an intelligent faith, *i.e.* a faith which has emerged into clearly defined idea, and not a mere warm emotion. If the Word is to be the foundation of our entire religious faith, then we must not only feel its spiritual power of truth, but understand its method of bringing to us the truth. The history of religion shows us that, in regard to this and other important doctrines, the crudest rational speculations and the wildest fancies of imagination may attach themselves to warm religious feeling, if we are not careful to develop our religious ideas in harmony at once with religious faith, with real facts, with conscience and with reason. The religious intuition of every true Christian certainly and unmistakably finds in God's word the quality of Divine truth, but whether or not that quality involves historical and scientific inerrancy, as well as moral and religious truth, whether the form in which the truth is presented is to any extent affected by the infirmities of the human instrument, these are questions of fact, and not either of pure faith or *a priori* speculation or blind fanciful zeal.

We have said that the facts from which our two main questions are to be answered can only be found from the books themselves. We may further add that our study should be devoted most largely to the New Testament. We make this claim not because the Old Testament scriptures do not afford evidence of the quality of

inspiration and of the method of its operation. We believe that they furnish both. But certainly if anywhere the most perfect results of inspiration are to be found it is in the New Testament; and if anywhere the highest form or method of operation of the spirit is to be found (and Paul says that even in the New Testament age there were diversities of gifts some higher and some lower and diversities of operations), it is in the case of such inspired men as Paul and John. So the Jewish Church judged the inspiration of Moses to be of a higher type than that of the prophets, psalmists and writers of wisdom. We will not assume that this is a correct judgment, but it certainly points to the probability that there are diversities of methods of the work of the spirit in the production of this word; and if so, we are certainly justified in beginning at the point where we may find the work in its most perfect form and results.

There is another important reason for beginning our investigation with the New Testament; we are here nearer to the facts not only in time, but also in manner of spiritual life and thought. The spiritual life of the Christian Church is continuous from the Apostolic age. The very forms of language used to set forth its spiritual conceptions date from that age. Our religious life is not or should not be Jewish but Christian. The entire intellectual, moral, and religious life of the earlier ages was doubtless upon a lower plane. Even if we should

find that at times in remote ages the operation of the inspiring spirit was after the manner of mantism, or clairvoyance or some other form of occultism, it by no means follows that we are to define the work of the Holy Spirit by such remote and inferior forms which may have been the only possible to the age or to the man. The manner in which God spoke to Balaam, even if we were certain that we knew all about it, is surely not to be the measure of his speaking to a Paul or a John.

On this question therefore the inductive method is certainly essential. We must study the facts and listen to the testimony of the men themselves. And we shall begin at the point where the men speak most fully, where the facts are most directly recorded, where we have, not a dim ancient tradition, but the living voice or pen of inspired men to whom we directly owe our own spiritual life and conceptions.

CHAPTER V

INSPIRATION AND THE CREATION OF THE WRITTEN WORD

INSPIRATION is the term used by common consent since the Apostolic age to denote the work of the Holy Spirit in the production of the Word, which is the instrument by which men are brought to a knowledge of God. In the definition of this term or rather of the work which it designates, it is quite useless to make the attempt by any *a priori* method. We are by no means qualified to say how God should proceed in this matter, or what should be the nature of the communication by which He makes Himself known. Here especially, we must be guided solely by a candid and careful examination of the facts. The theologian, to be honest, must be true to all ascertained facts; but in a question of such supreme importance, the facts should be examined with no ordinary care.

Two questions will cover the field before us, but these are closely related and at points interdependent.

1. What was the manner and effect of the influence of the Holy Spirit on the minds of the sacred writers?

2. What is the distinctive character of the Word itself as a result of this influence?

Subjective Inspiration.

The answer to the first question may be reached along the following lines of study:—

1. The personal testimony of the New Testament writers touching the Spirit's influence and leading upon themselves.

2. The New Testament account of prophecy as a spiritual gift.

3. The relation of this to other spiritual gifts.

4. Its relation to the ordinary and abiding work of the Spirit as spiritual enlightenment.

If it be objected that this is an appeal to the men themselves to ascertain what are their own gifts, and that of this we should have some evidence outside of their own testimony, the answer is that we are not now seeking to establish the fact of inspiration, but to ascertain its nature. The fact is a part of the distinctive character of Christianity as unfolded in the history of revelation. If our studies have led us to any result, it is this, that Christianity was established in the world as the result of a supernatural power enabling men to understand moral and religious truth; and that as a result of this power resting upon men in the Apostolic Age, there grew up, first a spoken, and then a written word. The historical evidence of this fact from the New Testament and from all collateral testimony is, we think, indisputable. Our object now is to

reach a more exact conception of the nature of this influence as it wrought in the minds of these original authors of the Word. Of this, the only direct and natural source of information, is the testimony which they give as to this influence and its relation to their work as preachers and writers. All other sources must be indirect and inferential, and would be of very imperfect value apart from this. Nor is this source of information untrustworthy. Only direct and positive evidence to the contrary should lead us to distrust on this point the testimony of men who are the bearers to us of the most perfect religious truth which the mind of man has yet received. In the first place, as writers each one of these men addresses himself to his work in a perfectly natural and businesslike way. There is very frequently no preface, and just as frequently the preface makes no reference to the writer, and in but one instance to any supernatural qualification for his work, and that in a modest historical fashion. Of the twenty-seven books of the New Testament, we have nine probable authors. The first of these attacks his work in the most direct and historical fashion after the model of the ancient Hebrew records. It is like the documents in Genesis, "The book of the generations." When he twice speaks of himself, it is as of no remarkable person, but as "a certain man named Matthew sitting at the place of toll," and classed by the Pharisees with "publicans and sinners," or in the list of Apostles as "Matthew the publican." The

second writer in like manner adopts an ancient Hebrew method of stating his subject, "The beginning of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God." In his narrative, his own name never occurs; and we know both these as authors of the first two gospels only by the MS. headings which date back to our oldest copies and translations, and by continuous historic testimony from the sub-Apostolic age. The third writer does introduce himself and speaks of his qualifications for his work, but not as supernatural, but as the ordinary common qualifications of an accurate historian. He receives his information from those who "from the beginning were eye witnesses and ministers of the Word"; and he has himself "traced the course of all things accurately from the first," and he writes that his reader may "know the certainty" of these matters. In his second treatise the point where he himself takes part in the events is marked only by the use of the first person plural.

The fourth writer, again a Hebrew by education as well as parentage, adopts the Hebrew Levitical style, and refers to himself only in a supplemental fashion toward the close as writing to establish the religious faith of his readers, and if the last verses are from his hand as giving true testimony, though far short of a full account. His first epistle is absolutely without any personal reference except the use of the first personal pronoun, and throughout, he addresses his readers in the second person after the style of a loving

father and faithful pastor. With these may be classed James and Jude. James writes simply as "a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ," and proceeds at once to pour out of the fulness of his heart the truth which he has to declare. Jude in the same way styles himself "a servant of Jesus Christ," but says, that "while he was giving all diligence to write" unto his readers "of the common salvation," he "was constrained to write," exhorting them "to contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered unto the saints." Here is an inward consciousness which is at once natural and without boastful self-consciousness, and yet implies an unusual sense of responsibility. While he is engaged in diligent preparation for a written exposition of the "common salvation," of which he seems to regard his hearers as already possessing a general knowledge, he is constrained to write not an exposition or general treatise, but an "exhortation" to a pressing present duty, evidently to meet a pressing danger. The same spirit breathes through the last sentences of the epistle to the Hebrews, where the writer, in the most modest and deferential terms, refers to himself and his readers, "I exhort you, brethren, bear with the word of exhortation."

Thus all these writers of the New Testament stand before us, either silently or by express though modest and unassuming statement, as careful painstaking and truthful recorders of the great facts of the Gospel, or as men who have

a message of truth or of exhortation which they feel constrained (a duty) to deliver to their fellow-christians, and this message in each case arises out of the historic circumstances of the case.

Two writers, Paul and Peter, remain, and one special book, the Revelation of John the Divine. Peter and Paul differ from the writers already considered in introducing themselves to their readers as Apostles, a term implying an office and authority of a special character. The use of this designation by Paul is limited by the following exceptions: first, the two epistles to the Thessalonians and that to the Philippians in which Timothy, or Silvanus and Timothy, are joined with him in the salutation, and the Epistle to Philemon which is of a personal character. Otherwise the use is constant, and implies that in these writings they were conscious of a religious authority implied in their office. They wrote as men conscious of a commission from Christ or from God. But this consciousness does not interfere with the natural relations of their Epistles. Each has its object arising out of the living history of the Church; and whatever is implied in the office and gifts of an apostle, the style and contents and occasion of each epistle arise naturally out of the circumstances, actions, and character of the churches. We thus obtain from the character of all the New Testament writings thus far examined, abundant evidence that the influence of the Holy Spirit has

not superseded the use of common literary forms, of personal peculiarities of style, of judgment and common sense in dealing with the matters in hand, or of the exercise of care in collecting facts and of judgment in their orderly arrangement and presentation. It may quicken, but it does not supersede the exercise of memory itself. It is thus no ecstatic, mantic state or trancelike vision, or loss of self-control, but a full conscious exercise of all the intellectual and moral powers, and literary gifts of the writer. Everywhere the spirits of the prophets are, in the words of Paul himself, "subject to the prophets." There may appear to be an exception to this in the book of Revelation, Peter's vision, and one or two visions of Paul. But if these are of a different nature (and we shall examine them presently) they are clearly the exception, not the rule. The natural gifts and faculties of inspired men have thus full play, and their work evinces literary ability of great variety of form, and of that highest order which arises from abundant fulness and clearness of thought and deep earnestness of moral nature. The influence of the Holy Spirit on these men is thus something which underlies and harmonises with this perfect exercise of their native powers according to their usual laws of action.

Omitting for the present the historical writers who speak of themselves only as asserting in a natural way the historical accuracy of their narrative, the writers of the Epistles each make use

of terms which will guide us to a more definite, positive conception of the work of the Spirit on the minds of inspired men. Peter and Paul write under consciousness of Apostolic office and authority. Jude and the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews write as exhorters, a term also used frequently by Peter and Paul to describe their work in addressing the churches. James and John use neither of these terms, but none the less speak with the authority of Apostles and with the conviction and earnestness of exhorters. This gift of exhortation was one of the special gifts of the Spirit exercised by the prophets, as appears from 1 Cor. xiv. 3: "He that prophesieth speaketh unto edification, and exhortation and comfort." It is also constantly applied to the work of the Apostles themselves in addressing the churches, and is even used to designate the entire work of the Holy Spirit in the Church, as He is called by our Lord the Paraclete or Comforter, of which the verbal form is frequently rendered by our English "exhort," as in Hebrews xiii. 22.

The first inquiry to which we are thus led is, What is the work of the Spirit in the qualification of the Apostles for their office and work, especially that part of it which relates to their doctrine or teaching? The consideration of the prophetic gifts will easily follow this.

That the most essential part of the Apostolic office was the founding of the Church in doctrine will appear from the following considerations:—

1. In their original selection, He chose the

twelve "that they might be with Him, and that He might send them forth to preach" (Mark iii. 14). He made them understand that to them "is given the mystery of the kingdom of God" (iv. 11). To these "He privately expounded all things" (iv. 34), and from time to time He employed them as assistants in His work of teaching and preaching.

2. His final commission to them was to teach and preach as well as to admit men into the Church by the ordinance of baptism. Matt. xxviii. 19-20; Mark xvi. 15; Luke xxiv. 47, 48.

3. Out of this grew their own personal sense of responsibility as apostles, resulting in constant labour as teachers of the infant Church. Acts ii. 42; v. 42; vi. 4; viii. 14-25; xi. 22-26. In fact, almost all the entire history of the Acts of the Apostles might be quoted in illustration of the magnitude and importance of the Apostolic office in this respect. The position is beautifully summarised by St Paul in a single expression (Eph. ii. 20), "Being built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief corner-stone."

The work of the Spirit which produced the Scriptures is thus that work by which the Apostles were endowed for their office of founding the Christian Church by preaching and teaching the gospel of Jesus Christ. In this work there are no sharers with or successors to Christ and His apostles and prophets mentioned or referred to in

the New Testament; all others are builders upon the foundations thus laid (1 Cor. iii. 10-15).

Of the New Testament conception of this endowment of the Spirit for the Apostolic office, we have several extended presentations:—

1. Our Lord's words in the fourteenth, fifteenth, and sixteenth chapters of St John's Gospel, especially the following: "But the Comforter, even the Holy Spirit whom the Father will send in My name, He shall teach you all things and bring to your remembrance all that I said to you," xiv. 26. "But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth which proceedeth from the Father, He shall bear witness of Me: and ye also bear witness, because ye have been with Me from the beginning" (xv. 26, 27). "Howbeit, when He, the Spirit of truth is come, He shall guide you into all the truth: for He shall not speak of Himself; but what things soever He shall hear, these shall He speak, and He shall declare unto you the things that are to come. He shall glorify Me; for He shall take of Mine, and shall declare it unto you" (xvi. 13, 14). These words, spoken by Christ Himself as words of a promise of which Luke as well as John is witness, and reflected as it were not only from the mirror of Apostolic memory, but also from that of experience, and recorded at the very close of the Apostolic age, give us a remarkably clear portrait of the subjective side of this work of the Spirit. It was nothing less than such an illumination of their

spiritual understanding as enabled them to grasp the full work of Christ for the world's salvation.

But this illumination was to come in no unnatural way, however supernatural it might be. It was a teaching in which many lessons were to be mastered, some of them with difficulty, as we see in the case of Peter himself. It was a remembrance quickened into activity by the loving joy inspired by the baptism of the Spirit. It was a guiding into truth along a progressive pathway, ordered of God in the history of the Apostolic age. It was a grace, of which one measure was given to Paul, and another to Peter, another to James, and yet another to John. The law of development and of employment of all natural gifts is thus given its full scope, as well as the law of spiritual enlightenment founded on a God-given capacity of faith.

2. St Paul has in three several passages described this process of spiritual enlightenment from his own experience. In the first of these, 1 Cor. ii. 6-16, he describes it as a Divine wisdom. This wisdom is not a matter of philosophy or of human science but is of God, and is revealed to man by the Spirit; and it makes known to us God's free gifts to those who love Him. It cannot even be expressed in the common worldly language of humanity, but must be both understood and expressed by the teaching of the Holy Spirit. It is thus a spiritual judgment or discernment, through which we understand the mind of Christ. It is the possession of this wisdom which

enables Paul to speak of himself and of Apollos and his fellow-apostles as "ministers of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God."

A second passage is found in 2 Cor. iv. 6, etc. After describing his sufficiency as a minister of the New Covenant as of God, which is a ministry not of the letter, *i.e.* of verbal forms to be repeated, but of the spirit, *i.e.* the inward power of truth, and speaking of the superior glory of this ministration and its transforming spiritual power, he goes on to say, "Seeing it is God that said light shall shine out of darkness, who shined in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. But we have this treasure in earthen vessels that the excellency of the power may be of God and not from ourselves." The third passage is closely related to this, as, like it, it brings the Apostolic endowment into close relation to his personal religious experience. It is found in Gal. i. 11-17: "For I make known unto you, brethren, as touching the gospel which was preached by me, that it is not after man. For neither did I receive it from man, nor was I taught it, but it came to me through revelation of Jesus Christ." . . . "When it was the good pleasure of God, who separated me, even from my mother's womb, and called me through His grace, to reveal His Son in me that I might preach Him among the Gentiles, immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood, neither went I up to Jerusalem to them which were Apostles before me, but I went away into

Arabia." We do not think that either of these passages implies that Paul received his knowledge of the historic facts upon which the gospel is founded, the facts of Christ's life, death, and resurrection by a supernatural communication. With these the man who was a diligent student of all that pertained to his people could scarcely be unacquainted; and the very fact that he speaks of his unbelief, which is not a mere negative ignorance, but a rejection of truth presented, implies that the facts were known to him, and that he had rejected their spiritual significance. But it does imply that by the Holy Spirit he was taught the full saving significance of these facts, first in his own personal experience "to reveal His Son in me," and then in their significance for the salvation of Jew and Gentile, and that with a breadth and fulness of understanding not yet attained by those who had been apostles before him. Later he went up to Jerusalem, when his manner of preaching was called in question, and laid before the men of repute the gospel which he preached among the Gentiles. These he says "imparted nothing to me; but contrariwise when they saw that I had been intrusted with the gospel of the uncircumcision, even as Peter with the gospel of the circumcision, and when they perceived the grace that was given unto me, James and Cephas and John, they who were reputed to be pillars gave to me and Barnabas the right hands of fellowship that we should go unto the Gentiles and they

unto the circumcision." Then follows his account of his conflict with Peter whom he regards as weakly and even sinfully inconsistent, notwithstanding his Apostolic grace. These passages throw not a little light on the Apostolic gift of inspiration.

1. It was grounded in a living personal experience of Christian faith.

2. It led some into views of religious truth considerably in advance of others who had been much longer in the enjoyment of its influence.

3. It enabled those to grasp with hearty assent such more advanced truth when presented to them by Paul.

4. It was nevertheless probational and did not preserve even these men from moral weakness and inconsistency. It was not, therefore, an influence which made the Apostles either omniscient or infallible, but which led them into truth as God ordered, and as the needs of the Church required. One of Paul's expressions is peculiarly significant, "We have this treasure in earthen vessels." Not only moral weakness but also mental and physical infirmities were still consistent with the possession of this Divine light and power.

To this Apostolic gift Paul refers in Eph. iii. 2-5, in these triumphant words, "If so be that ye have heard of the dispensation of that grace of God which was given me to you-ward; how that by revelation was made known unto me the mystery, as I wrote afore in few words, whereby

when ye read, ye can perceive my understanding of the mystery of Christ; which in other generations was not made known unto the sons of men, as it hath now been revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets in the Spirit." . . . "Unto me who am less than the least of all saints is this grace given, to preach unto the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ, etc.;" where its Divine glory is placed in contrast with his personal consciousness of unworthiness.

There are many other briefer passages which incidentally throw light on this inward consciousness of the Apostolic gift; the following may serve as examples:—1 Cor. xii. 8; Col. i. 28; 2 Pet. iii. 15; 1 John v. 7-12. In these it is emphatically a revelation of Christ and a gift of wisdom, understanding and knowledge.

Before leaving this part of our subject, it should be noted that it is a gift of utterance as well as of understanding. On the day of Pentecost it was manifestly such, Acts ii. 4; so in the case of their first persecution, Acts iv. 12, 31; and of Stephen, vi. 10. To this also St Paul bears testimony, 1 Cor. i. 5, where it is extended beyond the Apostolic circle; 1 Cor. ii. 13, where it extends to the choice of new and fitting words to express the new ideas of the gospel, as well as perhaps a style of discourse in harmony with the directness and simplicity of the truth.

From the pre-eminent Apostolic gift of the Holy Spirit we may turn now to a secondary form associated with it and included under it.

New Testament Prophecy.

This gift appears to have been by no means rare in the Apostolic age. It is applied by Peter to the entire result of the descent of the Spirit at Pentecost. Christian prophets are referred to four times in the Acts specifically; some of these being women, some of them persons who have not been included as New Testament writers, and some, persons who are elsewhere recognised as Apostles. From various passages in the epistles of Paul it appears that prophecy was by no means a rare gift in the Gentile Church. Its importance in the founding of the Church is manifest from the association of prophets with the Apostles in such passages as Eph. iii. 6, iv. 7, and from his estimate of it above other gifts, 1 Cor. xiv. 1, etc.

The most direct statement of the work of the prophet we have in 1 Cor. xiv. 3: "He that prophesieth speaketh unto men edification, and comfort, and consolation." Edification is addressed to the understanding, the intelligence of our spiritual life; hence Paul says, v. 19, "Howbeit in the church I had rather speak five words with my understanding, that I might instruct others also, than ten thousand words in a tongue." The foremost work of the prophet is thus the imparting of religious truth through the illumination of his own understanding; for he speaks with his own understanding as well as to the understanding of the Church. The second element of the work of the prophet, translated in the Revised Version

comfort, but, we think, with the A.V. and the American revisers, better exhortation, is addressed to the moral nature. It is, to borrow Paul's words, "the Spirit helping our infirmities." The last, consolation or comfort, is addressed to the emotions and affections. It is such as the weeping sisters of Lazarus needed and received in their bereavement, John xi. 19, 31. The prophet is thus not a mere teacher, he is one who speaks out of the inward light and moral force, and joyous faith and warm love of his own spiritual being to the religious understanding, conscience, and heart of humanity.

Another important passage in the nature of prophecy is found in 2 Pet. i. 19-21: "We have the word of prophecy (made?) more sure; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed as unto a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day dawn and the day star arise in your hearts: knowing this first, that no prophecy of Scripture is of private interpretation. For no prophecy ever came by the will of man: but men spake from God being moved by the Holy Ghost."

We think few passages of Scripture have been more completely misunderstood than this. The subject of the entire section from verse 16 to the end is undoubtedly the certainty of the Christian faith. "We have not followed cunningly devised fables." This he founds (*a*) on his testimony as an eye-witness of the glory of the transfiguration; but (*b*) further upon the prophetic word, still stronger than any testimony

of miracle in its power to create faith, inasmuch as through its testimony the inward light shines in each man's own heart, bringing him the clearest conviction and most perfect assurance of truth. Hence we think the reference is not to the Old Testament prophecy, but to the New with its appeal with Divine power to the understanding, conscience and hearts of men. Such prophetic truth is not the result of any individual investigation, decision, or explanation of truth. It is the inner light of the Divine Spirit which enables man thus to speak from God.

In exact harmony with these passages we have in Eph. iv. 7, etc., the prophets associated with Apostles, evangelists, pastors, and teachers, as the complete spirit-given ministry of the Apostolic age; and their function is fully set forth in verses 12-16, as the unity of faith, the maturity of Christian manhood, the purity of doctrine, and the holding and speaking of the truth in love.

From these passages it appears that the prophets both extended and perfected the Church's knowledge of the things of God throughout the Apostolic age. The great business of prophecy was thus directly practical, and was concerned with present duties and dangers; and to meet these it declared the fulness of the truth as it is in Christ Jesus. At times it reached to foresight of future events. This is implied in the promise, John xvi. 13, "He shall declare unto you the things which are to come"; and we have a practical example of it in Acts xi. 27-

30, as also in xx. 23, and xxi. 11. But this foresight of the future was quite a secondary matter, and always subservient to the proper purpose of the prophetic gift. We have no example of a prophetic revelation of either the past or the future after the manner of the mere diviner. A good illustration of the office of prophetic foresight or knowledge we have in Acts xiii. 1, etc. There is a definite communication of God's purpose concerning Barnabas and Saul with a view to the action of the Church. Other examples of this prophetic intimation of facts which affected duty we have in Acts ix. 10, etc., where Ananias is divinely directed to Saul; Acts. x. 1-23, the case of Cornelius and Peter, where the ancient method of vision reappears; xvi. 9, Paul's call to Macedonia. On the other hand, we have enlightened judgment directly in Acts xv. 28, 29; compare verse 9.

The Relation of Inspiration to the Extraordinary Gifts and Ordinary Work of the Holy Spirit.

After this study of the apostolic and prophetic gift, it will not be necessary to dwell at length on these subordinate points. The Apostles themselves were richly endued with the extraordinary gifts of the Spirit. On the other hand, prophecy, the word of wisdom, the word of knowledge, are nearly akin to inspiration itself; they seem to imply a measure of the same gift, and are declared to be the work of the same Spirit. In fact the apostolic and prophetic gifts are enumerated with the charismata in

1 Cor. xii. 28; but as the highest places in the Church, and as the greatest and most desirable gifts, 1 Cor. xiv. 1.

In like manner the ordinary enlightening work of the Spirit in the hearts of believers is so magnified by St John, 1 John ii. 20, 27, as to raise it to the seeming level of a lower form of inspiration. So in 1 Cor. xii. 13, Paul unites all the work of the Spirit in one expression, "For in one Spirit were we all baptized into one body . . . and were all made to drink of one Spirit." There is thus no sharp line of distinction drawn in the New Testament between the various phases and degrees of the work of the Spirit.

Specialization in result and pre-eminence in degree alone separate the highest from the lowest, the gift of the apostles and prophets from other charismata, and both from the baptism of the Spirit given to all believers. In fact, the latter as perfect charity, is in Paul's view the greatest of all, as all others are so bound to the limitations of humanity as to be finally superseded by more perfect things to come.

This study of the prophetic gift in the New Testament will enable us to formulate a general statement as to the New Testament presentation of subjective inspiration.

General Summary of Subjective Inspiration.

1. Those, who following our Lord Jesus Christ, laid the foundations of Christianity by preaching

and writing, did so by the power of an abiding endowment of the Holy Spirit.

2. The foundation of this endowment was laid in a personal experience of the enlightening and renewing power of the Spirit, and a personal knowledge of the truth as it is in Christ Jesus.

3. This endowment unfolded, to each according to his measure, and by degrees, as required by the providential history of the Church, the entire Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ as founded in His life, death, works, teaching, resurrection, and gift of the Holy Spirit, making them "sufficient ministers of the Word."

4. It included gifts of utterance which enabled them to convey this gospel to others, both as a spoken and as a written Word or Scripture.

5. It included an opening up to their minds of the Scriptures and institutions of the Old Testament, and of their relation to the Gospel of Christ, and to God's purpose of salvation for the whole world and all the ages in Christ.

6. It included an opening up to their minds of the scope and progress of the Kingdom of Christ in the world's future, and of its relation to eternal things. This was sometimes presented in direct and broad statements, as by Paul in Romans and Ephesians, sometimes for special reasons in veiled and allegorical form, as in the parables, and especially in the Apocalypse.

7. It included, in a pre-eminent degree, the insight or discernment both of moral judgment

and of religious faith; enabling these men to guide the Church in all matters of duty to God and man, and to exhibit to the faith of the Church "the fulness of the blessings of the Gospel of Christ."

8. There existed even in the Apostolic Church, various degrees or measures of this inspiration, some of which were quite imperfect; and also spurious imitations of it, carefully to be distinguished from the true work of the Spirit. Of these the Church was required to judge.

9. Even in its greatest fulness, those who possessed it recognised that they "had this treasure in earthen vessels"; and subordinated even their inspired judgment to the words of Christ, 1 Cor. vii. 25, 40.

Objective Inspiration.

Our second question is, What are the Divine qualities attached to the Scripture as the product of this subjective inspiration? These qualities are expressed by St Paul in the term θεοπνευστος, God-inspirited, which may be interpreted as signifying in a general way that the Word is both the product of the Holy Spirit, and the instrument through which He works. In both these relations the Word is partaker of the attributes of the Holy Spirit, especially the following:—

1. Truth, John xvii. 17-19; 2 Cor. vi. 7; Eph. i. 13.

2. Immutability and eternity; 1 Pet. i. 22-24.

3. Divine spiritual power and life.

It is in view of these Divine qualities that it is called the Word of God, Eph. vi. 17; 1 Thess. ii. 13; 1 Pet. i. 23. Yet it must be borne in mind that these high prerogatives belong not to the mere outward form, though that too has been glorified by the power of the Spirit, but to the inner content, the Spirit, and the truth. Even the letter of the new Covenant may become dead and deadly, the Spirit alone giveth life; 2 Cor. ii. 6. But of this Divine content of Spirit and truth, the form is thoroughly human. The words, the setting of thought and illustration, the modes of speaking of facts of nature and history, and countless other things which belong to the characteristics of human literature, all are after the manner of men, and of the common thinking of the age. They are the setting in contrast to the gem, the earthen vessel in contrast to the treasure. All this Paul has set forth in a striking way in 2 Cor. iii. 5, and iv. 7. Again, in 1 Cor. ii. 3-5, we have a further interpretation of the earthen vessel, where he tells us that, in so far as the Word as spoken by him was judged by human standards of rhetoric, oratory or science or philosophy, it partook of the weakness of the instrument. It was not human wisdom or perfection, but Divine truth and power which characterised it. It is very certain from these words that Paul made no claim to infallibility in matters of speculative

philosophy or science. It is by no means clear that he would have claimed infallibility in matters of historical information, though he certainly on all occasions laid claim to honesty.

Using Paul's figure to describe the human side of the Word, we may safely say that the earthen vessel determines the human form of the Word. This includes (*a*) language, and all that belongs to the mere expression of the thought; and (*b*) in all probability also current thought forms, modes of reasoning, conceptions of natural and other facts used for illustration or application of the truth; in fact all that does not constitute the substance of the truth itself. The question of the extent to which the human vessel thus affects the form in which God has given us His Word, is to be determined, not by *a priori* considerations, but from careful study of the writings themselves as literature, whether historic, poetic, or epistolary in form. There is no doubt that the Divine Spirit and truth in these men often raised them above their natural level, even in the expression of their thought and its literary form. Hence we must not be too ready to accept supposed imperfections. On the other hand, human limitation is not to be regarded as an unreasonable thing, or as detracting from the Divine value of the Word. But still further we find clearly that the earthen vessel can receive but a limited measure of Divine truth. On this fact the whole doctrine of progressive revelation rests. As the human capacity to receive has increased,

God has given more. The inspiration of Pentecost did not give Peter the full measure of truth which he himself afterwards received; and possibly he never reached the measure given to Paul and John. If Second Peter be genuine, even to the end he found the wisdom given to Paul "hard to be understood." These principles will find special illustration while we consider very briefly—

The Inspiration of the Old Testament.

It is very certain that the prophets of the Old Testament, like the apostles and prophets of the New, claimed to speak the Word of God; Isa. vi., and the first verses of Jeremiah and Ezekiel are examples of this. This claim is clearly recognised by Christ and His Apostles; and is referred to the same Spirit who inspired the men of the new dispensation. This appears in a general way from our Lord's appeal to the Old Testament Scriptures, though He makes no dogmatic assertion as to their inspiration. Heb. i. 1 is quite explicit, as is 1 Pet. i. 11, and probably 2 Tim. iii. 16. The Spirit of the Old Testament was the Spirit of Christ; and God spake by the prophets.

But in the interpretation of these general statements, we must observe also the following facts set forth in the New Testament and even recognised by the prophets themselves:—

1. The measure of the Spirit under the Old

Testament was not the fulness of the gift under the new dispensation, in these respects—

(*a*) Things fully revealed in the New were but partially disclosed under the Old; 1 Pet. i. 10-12; Heb. xi. 40.

(*b*) The entire resulting dispensation was in consequence imperfect and temporary; see Matt. xix. 8; Acts xv. 10; 2 Cor. iii. 7-11; Gal. iii. 23-25; iv. 3, 9, 25, 26; Heb. x. 1-9; xii. 18-27.

2. The gift of inspiration sometimes appears as occasional or sporadic, and in forms in which the conscious permanent endowments are less prominent than sudden spiritual rapture, or involuntary vision or foresight. Certainly Paul could not have said of many of these Old Testament seers that "the spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets." This, however, applies but slightly to the later and more advanced inspiration of the Old Testament. All the *writers* of the Jewish canon approach more nearly the permanent spiritual endowments of the New Testament. Sporadic inspiration, and forms of inspiration which might be called mechanical and almost unconscious, belong to the earlier periods, and to men outside the chosen line which God was training for His service. They belong to an age in which the instrument is not yet fully fitted to receive and understand the Word. In view of these facts we must recognise—

1. The progressive development of revelation under the Old Testament.

2. That the truth communicated was at first rudimentary, and its apprehension imperfect.

3. That the methods of the operation of the Spirit are fitted to the childhood of the race and even of the chosen people.

4. That its divinity appears not only in its fundamental, moral, and religious truth, but still more in the prophetic promise through which it is full of better things to come.

CHAPTER VI

THE OFFICE AND AUTHORITY OF SCRIPTURE

THE office or function of Scripture, and of the Word of God in its still wider forms, is to convey to the conscience and religious faith of men the saving truth of the Gospel. It is the office of the entire ministry, for this ministry is pre-eminently a ministry of the Word. Besides many other passages it is comprehensively set forth in a passage to which reference has already been made, 2 Tim. iii. 16, 17. There the office of Scripture depends upon its inspiration. It is as inspired of God that the Scripture "is also profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for instruction which is in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, furnished completely unto every good work." This office it fulfils by the power of the Spirit and as the truth. "Our Gospel came not unto you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost and in much assurance," 1 Thess. i. 5. And so Christ says to those to whom He spoke the Word, "If ye abide in My Word then are ye truly My disciples; and ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free. Its power is the power of truth and of the Spirit."

It is this power which is referred to in the words, "The Word of God is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing even to the dividing of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and quick to discern the thoughts and intents of the heart." It is of the very nature of truth and love, their inward energy, to create faith. Only moral obduracy and blindness can resist its power. The Word is given everywhere, not as a formal outward rule of conduct and thinking, but as an inward living power of faith and of motive to right life. The New Testament, therefore, constantly magnifies the Divine power of the Word, and says little about its authority.

We have already seen that authority alone cannot command living faith. That implies the vital touch of truth itself with the living spirit. When this has taken place, authority or external influence of any kind is no longer needed. We are no longer under tutors and governors, but have found the Christ, through whom we know the truth which makes us free. We submit to authority, acquiesce in or even assent or consent to its dictates, or trust to its direction. But all this implies our spiritual weakness, ignorance, blindness. The Samaritans were led to Christ by the authority of the woman from the well but when they had listened to Him for themselves, they no longer needed such authority. Authority is thus first of all a guide to the ignorant, a leader to those who are in darkness,

but it fails of its purpose unless it leads to knowledge—to light. Authority in the original and proper sense of the term belongs to a person. It is the distinguishing quality of a ruler, a law-giver, a judge, an arbiter, an expert in matters of knowledge. From this use arises by metonymy its application to a code of laws, a creed, a body of doctrine or teaching, as the test by which the judge decides, and which can be applied as a standard or measure of truth. This is its use for correction, and implies not only ignorance, but error. That both these are characteristic of humanity, especially in matters of religion, is so true that authority is the attribute of Scripture to which we most frequently apply ourselves. In contrast with this lower stage in that described by St John (1 John ii. 27), "And as for you, the anointing which ye received of Him abideth in you, and ye need not that anyone teach you; but as His anointing teacheth you concerning all things, and is true, and is no lie, and even as it taught you, ye abide in Him." This state is not one of erratic self-directed dogmatism, but one of settled abiding in the light received from the Word. The Word is no longer an external guide to the blind, but a light shining into the recovered vision. St Peter combines both in 2 Pet. i. 19, where, referring to the prophetic word, he says, "Whereunto ye do well that ye take heed as unto a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts."

Besides these functions of the Authority of Scripture as the guide to the ignorant and the corrector of error, it is also set before us as the standard of teaching, "Whether prophecy, let us prophesy according to the proportion of our faith," which touches this point if we interpret it with many later expositors of the *regula fidei*. Certainly all these three aspects of the Authority of the Word are very clearly set forth in the Epistles to Timothy, when the necessity for such authority had become clearly evident. Already Paul found men "teaching a different doctrine," and "giving heed to fables and endless genealogies, the which minister questionings, rather than a dispensation of God which is in faith." To this he opposes "the sound doctrine, according to the gospel of the glory of the blessed God which was committed to my trust." So the "doctrine of devils," "lies in hypocrisy," "old wives' fables," "questionings and disputes of words," "profane babblings and oppositions of the knowledge which is falsely so called," "words to no profit," "foolish and ignorant questionings," are throughout these Epistles opposed to "the truth," "the words of the faith and of the good doctrine which thou hast followed," "the teaching," "the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the doctrine which is according to godliness," "the pattern of sound words which thou hast heard from Me" "the word of truth," "the sacred writings," "Scripture inspired of God." The whole argument of these two epistles, thus by every

variety of expression asserts the authority of the Apostolic Word, whether spoken or written, as against the prevailing forms of error which already threatened religious faith. Even at this early period these errors had ranged themselves under the two fundamental classes which have appeared in all the ages. They were either historical errors, the superstitious substitution of fables for the attested facts upon which the gospel was founded; or they were speculative errors, the substitution of questions, and reasonings, and a false gnosis, for the luminous intuition of faith which laid hold with full assurance of the truth of God, or which discerned the way of righteousness with full conviction of conscience.

That the Apostolic Word was thus the acknowledged standard of faith and doctrine at the close of the Apostolic age itself, is thus quite clear from the evidence of these epistles. This evidence is corroborated by the Epistle to Titus, by that to Hebrews (see Heb. ii. 1-4), by Second Peter, John and Jude.

One question remains: Are there collateral or co-ordinate authorities, or standards, or sources of Christian doctrine? This question has, in the history of the Church, taken three directions: (1) It has been claimed that out of the original spoken Word there has been preserved in the Church a continuous tradition of teaching, which expounds and enlarges the truth to be gathered from the written Word. (2) It is claimed that to the Church, especially in its ministry, has descended

the Apostolic authority and gift of declaring God's Word. (3) It is claimed that this gift still abides in the inner light which is given to every true Christian. Tradition, the Church, the illuminating spirit, in the individual believer are thus made co-ordinate authority with the written Apostolic Word.

Of these three, the last is so inconsistent with all unity of faith and standard of teaching, and has been so fruitful of error in the Church wherever it has appeared, that it has been rejected by the great body of believers. The illuminating spirit has its office, enabling our faith to understand the truth presented in the Word, which is the sword or instrument which the Spirit uses to bring conviction to the hearts of men. The words of St John, which we have already quoted, clearly point to Christians who are already established in the truth, to men who are enlightened by the Spirit. These need no longer the leading of human teachers. Their spiritual understanding is exercised to discern the truth, and they easily distinguish it from error. But whence did they receive the truth at first? Certainly from the Word of God. This word is, it is true, no longer to them an outward and mechanical guide, but an inward fulness of truth and light. But it is so because "that" (truth) "abides in them which they heard from the beginning." The illuminating Spirit is thus not in them as a discoverer of new truth, at variance with the old, but as the abiding light of the old truth; and it is only on

the condition of this which they heard from the beginning abiding in them that they "also abide in the Son and in the Father" (1 John ii. 24). The anointing itself is the same which "taught them" when in the beginning they first heard the Word. This inward illumination, then, in which St John rejoices as teaching these believers all things, is not co-ordinate with, or in any way capable of being opposed to, or added to, the Word as a standard of truth, but is nothing other than the power by which the Spirit accompanies the Word to give it effect in our faith, and its teaching is the teaching of the Word itself, in which the truly enlightened man "*abides*." The Word is still, and always, his original fountain of truth. The illumination is not to take the place of the Word, but to open our understanding to comprehend it. Even in the Apostolic age itself, while the gift of the Spirit belonged to all believers, the Church turned to the Apostles and prophets, and finally to Christ as the only foundation on which their faith could build.

The other two proposed standards are each embodied in the Church; and include, on the one side, the traditional teaching of the Church supposed to descend from Apostolic times, and, on the other, the decisions of the Church through its offices and councils to whom the Apostolic gift and authority is supposed to descend. It is indeed quite clear that in the Epistles to Timothy the Church is regarded as the "pillar or support" by which the truth is upheld, and that upon the

ministers of the Church is laid the responsibility of committing it as a sacred deposit to "faithful men who shall be able to teach others also." But the authority of all this is none other than the authority of the original deposit. There must be clear evidence that the teaching of the Church today is the original teaching of the Apostles, and our only and final evidence of this is comparison with the monuments of the Apostolic age—the writings which remain to us. These are all included in the New Testament, and to their teaching the writings of the next age add not a single point of doctrine. At the very point where tradition, if it can bring us anything of value to be added to the written Word, should be the richest in truly apostolic teaching, it has absolutely nothing to add to New Testament doctrine. That which first makes itself known by written monuments, only several generations after the death of all the Apostles, we may certainly claim to test by the Apostolic monuments themselves.

We have already briefly considered the authority of the Church as a source from which we may draw materials for our theology. In so far as it represents the common faith of living Christians, we have seen its value in correcting the personal errors of individual Christian men. Individual faith receives truth; but is not itself the measure of truth. Even the faith of a Peter was, at least at one time, short of the full measure of truth. Certainly the statement of truth which represents the faith of a great body of Christians, and that for many suc-

cessive generations, is a more perfect and adequate statement than that which represents the faith of any one individual. But still history makes it very evident that the faith of even the largest body of Christians, representing the longest succession of time, and the greatest variety of circumstance, may be very far from exhausting the full content of the Apostolic Word, or reflecting perfectly even its most fundamental truth. The Church may be a more perfect interpreter of the Word than the individual, and both the Church and the individual have their distinct duty in the reception of truth as living faith, and in its presentation to the world; but no individual, no Church, not even the Church universal, can claim the highest authority as a court of appeal when the question is, What is Christian truth? That place can be accorded to the teaching of Christ alone, and after Him to His inspired Apostles; and the abiding monument of their teaching is the written Word. This word began to be spoken by the Lord, but was fully unfolded from Him as its author by His Apostles and prophets through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. The Spirit which inspired and guided them to preach inspired and guided them to write. And this Word, created from Christ as the truth in the Apostolic age, has become the source of truth for all the world and all the ages, and the light to guide those that are in darkness and doubt, and the monitor to warn and call back all who are wandering into error, and the court of appeal in the

controversies which sometimes separate brethren in the faith. This supreme place of authority and influence it can share with neither the Church nor the individual conscience or understanding. And yet to neither the one nor the other does it present itself as an arbitrary power to force their faith, but as the light of truth in which both alike rejoice with full assurance of faith.

CHAPTER VII

THE CANON

THE final question to be investigated is, To what body of truth or to what writings may we ascribe these Divine attributes and power? and to what books does this apostolic authority belong? These questions were at the first by no means identical. While all Scripture was inspired, it was by no means the case that all inspired teaching, or even writing, was included in the canonical Scripture. According to St John's Gospel, even our Lord's doings and teachings have not been all so included one by one. It is quite possible, or even probable, that St Paul wrote epistles which have not been so included. The epistle of Barnabas, if genuine, was written by a man who possessed at least prophetic inspiration, Acts xiii. 1, and yet it is not so included. If the conception which we have so far formed of this subject is correct, inspiration is primarily of the truth, and was given widely and in various degrees for the unfolding and dissemination of the truth in the Apostolic age. The evidence of inspiration was direct and personal. The presence of the Holy Spirit unfolding the truth, and applying it with

power, was consciously manifest, both to the speaker and to the hearer. And without doubt the Spirit abides with the truth thus originally given throughout all time, and in every form into which it may be rendered. It may be translated into all languages; if faithfully translated it is still the inspired Word of God. It may be recast into all manner of literary forms; if in the process the truth abides, it is still endued with the power of the Spirit. Nothing can be more certain than that the inspiring Spirit thus demonstrated its own presence to all men in the Apostolic age; and this direct personal demonstration of the presence and power of the Spirit abides in the Church wherever the gospel is preached in its living power. Accompanying this inward demonstration, there were also frequently, but not always, accompanying signs and wonders, miraculous gifts of the Spirit, the office of which was, as we have seen, to make the presence of God manifest even to souls spiritually dull or dead. The inspiration of the Holy Spirit in apostles, prophets, and even evangelists and teachers and active workers in other offices of the Church, was thus a thing historically manifest throughout the Apostolic age; it was known and read of all men. Inspired men were themselves conscious of its light and power; even obdurate sinners were amazed at its results; and unwillingly trembled under its convictions. But when, towards the close of the Apostolic age,

the question of the standard of Christian doctrine or teaching was practically raised by the appearance of serious errors, such as are referred to in the pastoral epistles, and by St John, Peter and Jude, it was by no means sufficient to say, this is the teaching of inspired men, for there was a spurious inspiration or pretence of inspiration abroad, and false prophets and even lying signs and wonders deceived the people. The appeal was therefore not to inspiration, but to the original apostolic teaching, to that which they had heard "from the beginning," to "the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief corner-stone." This appeal from "other gospels" and "divers and strange teachings" to "sound words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ," began to be made distinctly in the Apostolic age, and is prominent in the writers of the sub-Apostolic age. At first it took various forms. The apostolic writings were not yet generally or widely distributed or within reach of the outlying churches. Hence men who had heard the Apostles, churches planted by the Apostles, and the bishops or overseers of the churches as the guardians of their purity, were all appealed to for the purpose of determining *the original apostolic doctrine*. This appeal to original testimony began in the Apostolic age itself, as appears from Luke i. 3, and Heb. ii. 3. If we extend the sub-Apostolic age to A.D. 120, the period during which intelligent pupils and auditors of the Apostles were still

living, we shall find in the brief writings remaining from that period—

1. Evident familiarity with the doctrines and facts set forth in the New Testament writings.

2. Verbal correspondences which clearly imply a knowledge of individual books of the New Testament.

3. Reference to the teaching which was from the beginning, and to apostolic teaching, as setting forth the true Christian faith in which the Church is exhorted to abide.

4. A constant and most abundant reference to the Old Testament, and quotation from it as Scripture, Holy Scripture, and the oracles of God.

The following from Bishop Lightfoot's translation of the epistle of Clement clearly sets out the common estimation of apostolic authority:—

"The Apostles received the Gospel for us from the Lord Jesus Christ; Jesus Christ was sent forth from God. So then Christ is from God, and the Apostles are from Christ. Both therefore came of the will of God in the appointed order. Having therefore received a charge, and having been fully assured through the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ and confirmed in the Word of God with full assurance of the Holy Ghost, they went forth with the glad tidings that the Kingdom of God should come."

This passage shows clearly that by Clement and his time the Apostles were recognised as

the divinely ordered expositors of the Christian faith. To the same fact Barnabas seems to refer in the expression (ch. v.), "He chose His own Apostles who were to proclaim His Gospel." Towards the close of this period the importance of the bishops as the guardians of the true faith, is seen from such passages as the following, from Ignatius to the Ephesians, chapter iii., "I was forward to exhort you that ye run in harmony with the mind of God; for Jesus Christ also, our inseparable life is the mind of the Father, even as the bishops that are settled in the farthest parts of the earth are in the mind of Jesus Christ." Another method of arriving at the facts of the faith during this traditional period is presented by Bishop Lightfoot in the fragments of Papias preserved by Eusebius: "On any occasion when a person came (in my way) who had been a follower of the elders I would inquire about the discourses of the elders—what was said by Andrew, or by Peter, or by Philip, or by Thomas or James, or by John or Matthew, or any other of the Lord's disciples, and what Aristion and the elder John, the disciples of the Lord say. For I did not think that I could get so much profit from the contents of books as from the living and abiding voice."

A similar appeal to the elders is found in the next age in Irenæus: "As I have heard from a certain elder who had heard from those who had seen the Apostles, and from their scholars," etc.

It is evident that at this point the appeal

to oral traditional teaching as to the contents of the apostolic doctrine is already in the third or fourth generation becoming indistinct, and we are thus prepared for the second period in which the appeal to and quotation from the apostolic writings become more definite, and in which at its close definite lists of the New Testament Books are existent. This period runs from A.D. 120 to 170 after which the books used in the churches are definitely divided into those universally acknowledged and those which are questioned.

In this period there is evidence—

1. That the books were used and read in the churches in their public worship.

2. That they were now the chief source of the living knowledge of apostolic doctrine.

3. That they were being carefully preserved and collected, and copies and translations made.

4. That they were appealed to in controversy concerning the true faith.

The faith in the New Testament which now became prevalent in the Church universal is thus summed up by Tertullian as quoted by Bishop Westcott.

"If it is acknowledged that that is more true which is more ancient, that more ancient which is even from the beginning, that from the beginning which is from the Apostles; it will in like manner assuredly be acknowledged that that has been derived by tradition from the Apostles which has been preserved inviolate in the churches

of the Apostles. Let us see what milk the Corinthians drank from Paul; to what rule the Galatians were recalled by his reproofs; what is read by the Philippians, the Thessalonians, the Ephesians; what is the testimony of the Romans, who are nearest to us, to whom Peter and Paul left the Gospel, and that sealed by their own blood. We have moreover churches founded by John. For even if Marcion rejects his Apocalypse, still the succession of bishops (in the seven churches), if traced to its source, will rest on the authority of John. And the noble descent of other churches is recognised in the same manner. I say then that among them, and not only among the apostolic churches, but among all the churches which are united to them in Christian fellowship, that the Gospel of Luke which we earnestly defend has been maintained from its first publication. And the same authority of the apostolic churches will uphold the other gospels which we have in due succession, and through them and according to their usage, I mean those of (the Apostles) Matthew and John; although that which was published by Mark may also be maintained to be Peter's, whose interpreter Mark was: for the narrative of Luke also is generally ascribed to Paul; (since) it is allowable that that which scholars publish should be regarded as their master's work. These are for the most part the summary arguments which we employ when we argue about the gospels against heretics,

maintaining both the order of time which sets aside the later work of forgers, and the authority of churches which uphold the tradition of the Apostles; because truth necessarily precedes forgery, and proceeds from those to whom it has been delivered." From this testimony, coming from the generation in which the work of collecting the books was substantially completed, we have clear evidence of two things—

1. That the principle which guided the Church in her judgment of the proper books to be received was that of apostolic origin and authority.

2. That the evidence upon which this fact was decided was the testimony of the apostolic churches by whom these books had been at first received and in whose hands they had been carefully preserved. In this way in the third and fourth generation after they were written the books took the place of oral tradition as the acknowledged exposition of the apostolic doctrine which was by all parties admitted as the true Christian teaching.

We have seen already by evidence at first incidental, and later more direct, that from the beginning these apostolic writings were prized most devoutly by the churches and diligently used for their religious instruction both publicly and privately. They were read in their assemblies for worship, and they were used in their schools for the instruction of novitiates. We now find this reverential regard assuming not

only a practical but also a dogmatic form. The collected books begin to be spoken of Scripture, and as the New Covenant or Testament, and the Gospels and Epistles to be compared to Moses and the prophets. The reverence for the Old Testament Scriptures which characterised the Jews had been easily transferred to the Christian Church. As in the apostolic so in the sub-apostolic writings the Old Testament is largely quoted with devout faith as the Word of God. While pointing out its limitations and its transitory elements both our Lord and His Apostles had never for one moment discouraged or disturbed the religious faith which attached itself to the Old Testament Scriptures. Their work was "not to destroy the Law or the Prophets but to fulfil." The churches were thus accustomed from the beginning to the idea of a book of the Covenant, of sacred Scripture which they regarded as the Word of God. This last term had also been applied from the beginning to the preaching and teaching. How soon it was extended to their writings we cannot tell, but certainly from the time of Tertullian onward that idea was familiar to the Christian Church. Simultaneously there was transferred to the new body of Scripture the entire dogmatic view of inspiration and accompanying qualities which was held in the Jewish Church in regard to the Ancient Scripture. This was a very easy matter to men who from the very first had recognised the presence and influence of the

Holy Spirit in both the preaching and the writings of the Apostles.

The final stage of the development of the doctrine of the New Testament Scripture in the Church was again parallel to the Old Testament Scripture. The canon of the Old Testament had been finally fixed under the fires of persecution. When the attempt was made to overthrow the Jewish religion by the complete destruction of all copies of its sacred books, and when every Jew was called upon to preserve and defend them with his life, their collection and identification became a matter of supreme importance. A similar crisis occurred in the history of the New Testament Canon. The persecution of Diocletian, A.D. 303-311, created for the Church the new sin of the traditor, that of the man who delivered over the sacred books to be destroyed. The extreme repugnance with which this crime was regarded, was itself a most unmistakable evidence of the place which the sacred books occupied in the regard of the Church. It was also most positive evidence of the existence and collection of the canon in somewhat complete form. It was further proof that copies of these sacred books were well known and multiplied.

But besides being evidence of all this, the persecution, as of old, led to the more exact definition of the individual books which made up this body of sacred Scripture. Some were ready to save their lives by delivering up "useless writings," and though many regarded this

as an unworthy subterfuge, inconsistent with the courageous testimony of the martyr to his faith in God's Word, inasmuch as before his enemies he professedly denied that Word, or at least turned it over to destruction, it became important that the Word should be distinguished from all other writings. As the Church passed through this furnace of fire, her regard for the sacred books became intensified by the very sufferings endured in their defence. They were now consecrated by blood and stood forth as the symbols of the entire Christian faith.

The only step which now remained to complete the faith of the New Scriptures was a formal decision of an Ecclesiastical Council. The way was prepared for this in the general appeal to Scripture by both parties on the great questions decided at Nicæa. Next followed a brief sentence of a Synod held at Gangra, which speaks thus:—"We desire that what has been handed down to us by the Divine Scriptures and by the apostolic traditions, should be done in the Church." See Westcott, Part. III. Similarly the Council of Laodicea decided that only the canonical books of the Old and New Testament should be read in the Church. Probably the first list of canonical books of the New Testament sanctioned by synodical authority, was that passed at Carthage, A.D. 397, and this is generally regarded in the Western Church as the settlement of the question, though it did not place the matter beyond all

expression of variant opinion. In the East, the question seems to have been settled only by a general consent which seems still to leave the Apocalypse with some books not included in our canon, such as the Epistle of Barnabas, as still in doubt.

The whole question of the individual books of the Canon thus appears as one not of religious faith, or scriptural authority, but as one of historical evidence, and of the judgment of the Church upon that evidence with respect to the great body of the books of the New Testament, the evidence is conclusive and the judgment unanimous. If all the books included in any catalogue which has received any considerable support were included, probably no new doctrine would be added. If all which are excluded from the most limited of these catalogues were omitted, probably no doctrine would thereby be invalidated.

On the Canon of the Old Testament it is only necessary to add that the Canon accepted by the Hebrew people has been accepted in the Christian Church, as the truth of the Old Covenant was the foundation of the New. The Jewish doctrine of Scripture was peculiar, making three graded classes of books regarded as fully canonical, and a fourth ranking as religious, but below these. Several of this fourth class are embraced in the catalogue authorised at Carthage, but have not received any unanimous assent of the Christian church.

Summary of the Doctrine of the Word.

The Word of God in its written form thus comes to us as the result of a process at once human and Divine. It is founded in the Revelation of God made in Jesus Christ, His Incarnate Son. He is not merely its foundation, but His life and teachings form its chief content. He is further, not only its foundation and chief matter, but He also chose the human instruments through whom it was to be developed and proclaimed to the world. These were endowed for their work by the gift of the Holy Spirit in such measure as had never before been given to men. This Spirit wrought living spiritual experience of saving grace in their own hearts, gave them enlightened understanding of the truth as it is in Jesus, gave them powers of utterance fitted for their message, and confirmed all as the work of God by miracles and signs, as well as by the spiritual power which accompanied their word. This was the Divine side. But the instruments chosen of Christ to be the Apostles or messengers of this Word were men. Their language, their modes of thinking and of expressing thought, and their fundamental limitations of thought were those of men. The Divine treasure was thus given in earthen vessels. Thus as Christ Himself appeared as man, one "tempted in all points like as we are, yet without sin," so this Word assumes the form of human speech and literature. It has its human growth, its

relation to contemporaneous life and history, its local and temporal colouring, its human limitations of thought, its touch of human passions and sympathies; all indeed sanctified and ennobled for the Master's use by the Divine Spirit, but still perfectly human while gloriously Divine.

Nor was this Word separated by any hard and fast line from the spiritual life of the Church which it created, and with whose young growth itself grew to its full stature. The gift of the same Spirit was given to all, Apostles and brethren, and converts, in varying measures divided to every man, like nature's gifts, as God wills. The supernatural gift of Pentecost was like the opening of the great geological epochs, the introduction of a new and higher plane of life, to be continued to the world's end, and taking up into itself all the fulness of preceding spiritual life. But as in the entire history of God's creative work in bringing in the world's new forms of life, it began with a high tide of creative power. But this power was not a thing intruded and then as suddenly withdrawn, but an abiding spiritual life to spread over the world under the laws of human development. Apostles were followed and assisted by prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers scarcely inferior to them in the possession of the Divine gifts. Not even the first chosen twelve were to stand in solitary pre-eminence. One of them fell and went to his own place, and a new Apostle, who was witness of the Lord and of

His resurrection only in a supernatural way, arose to surpass them all in abundance of labours and richness of gifts, and power of preaching, and success in founding the Church, and fulness of written as well as spoken word.

When, therefore, the course of human development brought death as well as life, error as well as expanded truth, and it became needful that the Church should have a standard by which to judge of the various shades of teaching, and to detect the first insidious approach of disease, it could indeed refer back to the Apostolic age, and above all, to the words of our Lord Himself. Of the body of truth and of the chief written monuments coming from that age, there was no doubt. But the exact line which separated it from the less perfect forms, could only be drawn by ecclesiastical judgment, and that has never on this minor point been either perfectly clear or unanimous. But this does not in the slightest degree invalidate the gospel truth, or the Apostolic Authority, founded in Christ and His Spirit, with which it comes to us. It serves only to save us from a minute bibliolatry which has inflicted upon the teaching of the Church almost endless, though minor imperfections.

PART III

THE DOCTRINAL CONTENTS OF THE WORD

DIVISION I.—OF GOD

CHAPTER I

OF THE ORIGIN AND GENERAL CHARACTER OF THE CHRISTIAN CONCEPTION OF GOD

THE foundation of every religion is laid in its conception of the supreme object of its faith and worship, *i.e.* its god. This idea is also the measure of its moral and religious influence, or in other words of its power to mould the lives, and command the permanent confidence of men. It measures also its degree of perfection, and its power of advancement with the general development of the race. The idea of God embodied in the ancient mythologies was at variance with fundamental principles of morality, was incapable of forming the foundation of a pure and perfect religious faith, or of inspiring a reverent religious affection, and involved absurdities which sooner or later must end in unbelief.

The Christian conception of God does not originate with the advent of Christ. He un-

doubtedly brought into the world in his human nature a perfect consciousness of the true idea of God, such as the world had never known before; but this new and higher idea of God was built upon historic foundations, not only in his communication of it to his fellow-men, but in the human shaping which it took in his own thoughts, so far as we may judge from his words. He spoke as a man who had been trained to know the God of His fathers, but who in the depths of His own being beheld in that Father God a divine glory which the world had never known. This was His consciousness of Sonship and out of that consciousness He revealed the Father. This historic foundation of the Christian idea of God leads us back through the entire development of the Hebrew religion as recorded in the Old Testament. It even passes beyond this into that dim prehistoric region in which all the great elements of human life and history have their origin. The Old Testament Scriptures nowhere speak of their conception of God as a matter of prophetic, or mosaic, or patriarchal discovery, or primary revelation. To Moses God appears as the God of his fathers: Noah worshipped God before Abraham; and before Noah, Enoch walked with God; men began to call upon the name of the Lord in the days of Seth, but even before this Abel brought his offering and Adam, the primitive man received his commandments. But of the first introduction of this man to God there is no attempt at account, the narrative proceeds

as if he must have known Him. The Hebrew religious faith thus carries us back to the primitive idea of God given to the race as in itself an idea of the true God, and builds historically upon that basis a revelation of this true God ever advancing in adequacy and perfection.

In harmony with these facts, Paul in his mission to the Gentiles, as Christ in His personal mission to the Jews, builds upon the faith in God which he finds already there existent; but not in its corrupted forms of individual and well-known gods, but in the form of the search for the unknown God, whose power in the world they had been forced to acknowledge, Acts xvii. 23-29; And he refers that faith back to the foundation of the world, and to the revelation of God in the human conscience. Rom. i. 19, 20; ii. 14, 15.

Both Christianity and the Old Testament thus clearly recognise the validity of a general faith in God belonging to the race, and which it is their business, not to destroy, but to purify and perfect. To this faith Paul makes his appeal among the rude inhabitants of Lystra; and when standing before the proud and corrupt Felix, and to this same faith Peter makes his opening appeal when called to preach the gospel to the Roman centurion Cornelius and his Gentile friends. Christianity thus from the beginning placed itself in touch with the universal religious feeling of humanity, and extended to all faith in God, however feeble or blind or dark, the sympathy of a Divine charity. Would to God that its followers had

never failed to understand its true spirit and method.

Our first work is thus to enquire as to the original knowledge of God given to the race whether by nature or by revelation, for both the Old Testament and the New seem, not only to recognise such knowledge as the foundation of all religion, but also to hold men responsible for it, even amid all the darkness and perversions of heathenism; Acts x. 17; Rom. i. 20, 21; Isa. xl. 21. In many other such passages this universal idea of God is either predicated or assumed as the possession of the whole race and as the foundation of all moral and religious responsibility. Paul in Rom. x. 14, etc., especially sets it forth very explicitly. After stating the universal condition of salvation, "Whoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved," he proceeds, "How then shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in Him whom they have not heard?" . . . "But I say did they not hear? Yea verily, their sound went out into all the earth, and their words unto the ends of the world." One has only to look carefully at the argument here, as well as at the full context which we have not quoted *in extenso*, to see that Paul has before his mind, as the foundation of universal religious responsibility, and of the preaching of the Gospel itself, a knowledge of God not confined to the chosen people, not mediated through the preaching of Moses and the prophets alone, but taught by the

heavens which "declare the glory of God" "in all the earth" and "unto the ends of the inhabited world," known even among people "void of understanding" in the estimation of the Jews, and found even of those who sought not and asked not after God.

We are thus led to enquire—

1. What are the contents of this universal and fundamental conception of God?

2. Whence was it originally derived?

3. How has it been maintained as a universal faith of the race?

The primitive idea of God as appealed to in Scripture, and as found in more or less distinct form in even the most ancient religions, consists of four elements:—Power, Wisdom, Righteousness, and Goodness or Mercy. These elements are conceived in the concrete unity of a Being who is Author of all things, hence before all, and by whose power all things exist. We do not intend by this to assert that the most ancient religious faith which we can trace among men was monotheistic in the proper sense of the term. At the best, the conception of one only living and true God was but dim and undefined. The Vedic monotheism described by Max Müller in his various works is a good illustration of this. The object of the adoration of the worshipper varies with circumstances. It is now the sun, now the sky, now the earth, now the fertilizing rain-cloud; but in each case he finds in that object the same Divine attributes, and these are

essentially those of power, wisdom, righteousness and mercy. In other cases, as in the most ancient books of China, there is a clearer recognition of the one supreme and true God. Speaking of the Shu and the Shih, Dr Legge says, "In these books many things are predicated of Heaven, Ti, and Shang Ti, that are true only of the true God. He is the ruler of men and all this lower world. Men in general, the mass of the people, are His peculiar care. He appointed grain to be the nourishment of all. He watches especially over the conduct of kings, whom He has exalted to their high position for the good of the people. While they reverence Him and fulfil their duties in His fear, and with reference to His will, taking His ways as their pattern, He maintains them, smells the sweet savour of their offerings, and blesses them and their people with abundance and general prosperity. When they become impious and negligent of their duties, He punishes them, takes away the throne from them, and appoints others in their place. His appointments come from His fore-knowledge and fore-ordination.

Of ancient Egypt Rawlinson says, "Below the popular mythology there lay concealed from general view, but open to the educated masses, a theological system which was not far removed from pure natural theology. The real essential unity of the Divine nature was taught and insisted on. The sacred texts spoke of a single Being, 'the sole producer of all things in heaven and earth, Himself not produced by any,' the only true,

living God, self-originated,' 'who exists from the beginning,' 'who has made all things, but has not Himself been made.'" . . . "He was a pure spirit, perfect in every respect, allwise, almighty, supremely, perfectly good." . . . "No educated Egyptian priest certainly, probably no educated layman, conceived of the popular gods as really separate and distinct beings."

The Assyrians and Babylonians had fallen more deeply into moral corruption, and their religious faith was correspondingly degraded. And yet even here beneath their crass and often immoral polytheism, may be seen conceptions of justice and goodness and wisdom, as well as of power, in the gods whom they worshipped. Thus in the ancient world as it lay about the Hebrew people there was to be found a religious faith which made the idea of God familiar, and the fundamental Divine attributes a matter of common thought. And these attributes were not conceived as abstract qualities of the great world or of Nature, but as attributes of a personal being to whom they stood in a personal relation, in fact as the foundation of religion. It is in the light of these facts that we must read the Old Testament and especially the parts of it which date furthest back in the history of revelation. They begin with a language accustomed to speak of God, with a definite name, with titles of worshipful respect, with words which express His attributes, with terms already in use which express all the important factors of religion such as prayer,

sacrificial offering, trust, fear, obedience, judgment against sin, etc. They imply a well-known belief in these things, and they do not sever their religious faith from that of other nations except as protesting against the abominable immoralities and empty falsities and superstitions which they had substituted for the true God. We are thus led to look for something in the history of the race or in the common nature of humanity, whereby we can account for this ancient and historic belief in God.

Before appealing to ancient history for facts in answer to this question, we may clear the way by looking at the general facts of our own time. In fact we can only interpret the past by the present, as the geologist finds around him to-day the dynamic agencies which account for the facts found in the ancient strata. The world's faith in God to-day and our existing conceptions of God arise in three ways :—

1. From traditional teachings.

2. From personal experience of religious faith called out by the facts of our lives.

3. From processes of reasoning.

The first of these implies that the knowledge of God already exists among men. The same is we believe true of the third, for, as Mr Watson has shewn, no people have ever developed a philosophy who were not already in possession of a religion. The revelation of God therefore, either through the experiences of human life or by some entirely supernatural method, must lie

back of traditional teaching or philosophic speculation. Even if we account for the communication of the first idea of God to men by supernatural agencies, yet, if it were to be to succeeding generations anything more than a traditional form of words, men in each successive age must have for themselves known the God of their fathers by personal experience in His service; they must have proved His attributes and verified the traditional promises. Only thus would religious faith maintain its life and power. If this personal living relation to God declined, it is easy to understand how the idea would become obscured and corrupted. If it was maintained by faithful service of God, it is equally obvious that it would be as a "shining light, shining more and more unto the perfect day."

Exactly in harmony with these data from our present living experience are the oldest records or traditions of the knowledge of God among the Hebrew people. Like all ancient traditions many of them are fragmentary and exceedingly difficult of literal and historical interpretation; but the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews has not hesitated to interpret their uniform spiritual significance as a living personal faith by which the knowledge of God was maintained and increased from generation to generation. Abel, Enoch, Noah, Abraham, knew God by a living personal faith. Whatever were the objective facts of their lives by which they were brought into communion with God, it was by inward and

spiritual apprehension, by trust, love, reverence, and a spirit of obedience in their hearts that they knew God, and out of this religious feeling their conception of God was perfected.

For our purposes of Christian theology it is not necessary to follow the evolution and gradual perfecting of the conception of God through the Old Testament. It is sufficient to know that in its origin, in its maintenance, and in its gradual perfection, it has been from the beginning a living faith, a spiritual and not a merely intellectual faith; and that this spiritual idea was God-given to the race from the beginning. Even the teleological and the cosmological arguments are religious rather than philosophical as presented in the book of Job, in the Psalms and in Isaiah, and still more so the moral argument in which God's presence is enforced by His judgments, and by the voice of conscience in man.

Religious faith differs essentially from philosophy in its method of approaching the idea of God. It is a feeling awakened by the attributes, a sense of power, of wisdom, of righteous judgment, of goodness and mercy. And these attributes imply in their very nature and in the necessities of thought a being capable of sustaining them. On the other hand, philosophy from effect first predicates a cause and then from the nature of the effect infers the nature of the cause. Philosophy first recognises fact, existence as a matter of Knowledge and infers Cause and thence its attributes. Religion feels the presence of the

attributes, and in them directly perceives the being. But each finds God in the exercise of His power (the cosmological argument), in His wisdom (the teleological argument), or in His justice and goodness in His providences (the moral argument). Even the historical argument has its analogue in religious faith, for religious faith propagates itself by the power of sympathy; and the sympathy of men in religious faith is far more influential in producing living faith than the mere argument, that because men universally so believe, it must be true. Again the ontological argument in philosophy has also its counterpart in religious faith. This argument is supposed to be founded in the necessary laws of thought. It leads us to what cannot but be, to *that which must be* in the very nature of things. To this rational necessity in philosophy corresponds a moral necessity in ethics, the moral capacity leads us to *that which ought to be.* And so the religious nature leads us to the final good, that which is good (perfectly good), to be. And these three necessities, with a fourth of the beautiful, are in the deepest conviction of our nature one. We see at once that the beautiful and the good are not only fitting to be and good to be but that they ought to be; and our deepest conviction tells us that in some way, at some time, and in some place or sphere of being they must be. Possibly Anselm's argument was quite as much this instinct of his religious nature as the product of pure reason.

From our standpoint of theological study, we thus pass over the usual philosophical arguments for the existence of God. Historically, God has from the beginning revealed Himself to the religious faith of men. They have discerned His presence through His attributes in His works, just as sense discerns the presence of matter through its attributes, colour, form, taste, smell, etc. Philosophy can confirm this faith, and sometimes assist to purify it from superstitions, which are not a real religious faith but an imitation. True religious faith as we have seen is thoroughly rational. Superstition is always immoral, irreligious, or absurd, and often all these at the same time. But while reason and conscience may assist, our foundation for theology must be laid in religious faith, and this first of all apprehends God in His Attributes, His power, His justice, His wisdom, His goodness. To these we must now direct our attention.

CHAPTER II

THE ATTRIBUTES OF GOD

THE attributes of God are manifested to our religious faith—

1. In God's works of nature including our own spiritual being.

2. In God's providence which in its widest sense is His control of His works in their relation to Himself and to each other.

All this implies a God who stands not alone in an abstract perfection, and incomprehensible isolation, but in continuous relation to the things which He has made. These things have all thus their Godward side, and on this side they reflect some image of their author, they all spring from something in Him. This is the teaching at once of faith and reason; reason infers this, faith feels it. The bright light, the warm sunshine, the balmy breeze, each bring with them an impress of a goodness from which they come as themselves "good and perfect gifts." The learning of God through this varied impress of Himself upon His works, is a lesson of almost boundless amplitude. But it is one which has been so fully taught in the living Word which in the various ages God has sent to men, that it is not difficult

to collect and classify its leading elements as the fundamental attributes of God. Of each of these there is almost endless variety of aspect, and the vocabulary of religion has grown peculiarly rich in terms to express the varied manifestations of God's goodness, or wisdom, or holiness or love. To treat these as distinct attributes would only lead to confusion. We must seek such an enumeration as will be at once fairly comprehensive, and will give us clear lines of distinction, and thus afford a basis for both definitions and classification. It must not be forgotten that in God all attributes unite in the perfect unity of His being and work. The attributes all qualify each other. That which in Him is true is holy, and that which is holy is good. The distinctions are not so much in Him as in us. To His perfect intelligence perhaps the true nature of every attribute springs from one central glorious perfection of being. But we apprehend them according to our limited measure, one by one, as they appeal to and find in us reflections of the Divine image. We may thus look within for the lines along which to distinguish and define and classify the individual attributes; and at the same time we may collect them inductively from the word, inasmuch as this word as we have seen has also taken its form from our finite humanity.

Possibly the following enumeration without professing to be perfect may serve our purpose.

1. Attributes in which God stands related to all being—Omnipresence, Omniscience, Omnipotence.

2. Attributes in which He puts forth all activity, Goodness, Wisdom, Freedom.

3. The fundamental Moral Attributes; Truth, Holiness, Love.

It may be objected that the order here adopted is that of a philosophical scheme rather than of religious development. This is true, but seems unavoidable if we would secure distinctness of definition. The very object of Theology is to bring the implicit contents of religious faith into the form of clearly defined thought, so that they may be apprehended intellectually as well as religiously. This places it between faith on the one hand and science or philosophy on the other. If its true content must always come from faith, its form may often be suggested from science or philosophy or from the logical methods common to both.

Omnipresence.

Presence is the term by which we express personal relation to finite space and all that it contains. The presence of a finite person is limited to a finite space. So is the extension of a finite body of any kind. But presence and extension in space are two very different conceptions. Presence is a spiritual thing, and in its most complete sense it is possible only between two or more spiritual beings. We do not speak of being present to inanimate things, and only in a tropical sense of being present to the lower animals. We are present to our friends, and in this, that or the

other place only as the possible locality of spiritual activity. Apart from spiritual activity we merely are there as a stone might be. This spirituality of presence is an essential element in our religious apprehension of the presence of God. Men first learn to say, "Lo God is in this place" in connection with His manifested presence. When we say then that God is everywhere present, we signify that in all the plenitude of His power, and in all the qualities of His being, He is in every place in such a way that it may be at once the place of the exercise of His power, His goodness, His wisdom, in fact all His attributes. This attribute is thus the foundation of all the Divine relations and of the exercise of all the Divine attributes, and thus constitutes the fundamental attribute.

The scriptural presentation of the presence of God is thoroughly religious; it is always a presence to the religious consciousness and affections. This is expressed—

1. As the universal presence of God to all His creatures in intimate relation to them. Probably this was never more perfectly, religiously and beautifully expressed than in the hundred and thirty-ninth Psalm. Beginning with the omniscience of God, of which he is intensely and painfully conscious, and passing on to His power and His wisdom in fashioning man as the creature of His goodness, at the beginning he says, "Whither shall I go from Thy spirit? Or whither shall I flee from Thy presence?" and at the end he exclaims, "When I am awake I am still with thee."

An equally religious but terrible expression of the omnipresence of God in judgment is found in Amos ix. 2, and following verses, "Though they dig into hell thence shall my hand take them; though they climb up into heaven thence will I bring them down."

2. Over against this universal, active and energetic presence of God, knowing all and doing all, whether in mercy or in judgment, we have the universal dependence of all upon an ever present God. A notable expression of this, almost purely philosophical in its form and yet thoroughly religious in its spirit, we have in Paul's discourse at Athens (Acts xvii. 27-28). "He is not far from each one of us; for in Him we live, and move, and have our being." So in Col. i. 17 he says, "In Him all things consist"; and so the writer to the Hebrews says, "Upholding all things by the word of his power" (ch. i. 3).

3. Finally this attribute receives an almost abstract expression in Paul's phrase "filling all things," used in Eph. iv. 10, and i. 23. Possibly the expression of Jeremiah xxiii. 24, "Do not I fill heaven and earth?" has not the same meaning, though still an expression of the Divine Omnipresence; and certainly Ps. lxxii. 19 brings us back to the religious, praying that the whole earth may be the conscious theatre of His glory. And what is here a prayer becomes in Isa. vi. 3 the triumphant vision of religious faith, "The whole earth is full of His glory."

Omniscience.

Next to the Divine presence, the attributes of power and wisdom are perhaps the first to be recognised by religious faith. Power is seen in work, and of this work wisdom is the guiding intelligence. Almost simultaneous with this recognition of intelligence in God's works, is the recognition which arises in conscience under the guidance of religious faith. Out of these two arises that broad outlook of religious faith over the whole universe and the whole course of human history which gives such strength and confidence to the religious spirit. A conspicuous example of this we have in Acts xv. 18, when James, after appealing to the voice of the Spirit in olden time declaring the incoming of the Gentiles, draws from it this striking generalization; "known from the beginning of the world." The moral side is especially emphasized in Heb. iv. 13, "and there is no creature that is not manifest in His sight: but all things are naked and laid open before the eyes of Him with whom we have to do."

The Old Testament abounds in declarations of the all inclusive knowledge of God, both from the natural and the moral side; *e.g.* Job xxviii. 24, "For he looketh to the ends of the earth, and seeth under the whole heaven"; Prov. xv. 3, "The eyes of the Lord are in every place, beholding the evil and the good"; 1 Sam. ii. 3, "The Lord is a God of knowledge, and by him actions are weighed"; Job xxi. 22, "Shall any teach

God knowledge? seeing it is He that judgeth those that are high." Ps. cxlvii. 5; Isa. xl. 28. The recognition of this attribute is implied in all religious faith and worship; and its distinctly conscious apprehension is the basis of all the highest forms of faith. The danger of doubt here was early recognised especially on the moral side. In Job. xxii. 13, it is presented as a dangerous sin to say, "What doth God know? Can He judge through the thick darkness? Thick clouds are a covering to Him, that He seeth not, and He walketh in the circuit of heaven." Even then this was recognised as an "old way which wicked men have trodden"; and appears to correspond with the modern idea of a universal power in nature without personal conscious intelligence. The question in its moral bearing and its ancient answer are both given in Ps. xciv. 7-11: "They say the Lord shall not see, neither shall the God of Jacob consider. Consider ye brutish among the people, and ye fools when will ye be wise? He that planted the ear, shall He not hear? He that formed the eye, shall He not see? He that chastiseth the nations, shall not He correct? Even He that teacheth man knowledge. The Lord knoweth the thoughts of men that they are vanity." Here the faith that speaks out of conscience, asserting the universal intelligent presence of God is confirmed by an appeal to reason. Intelligence in man implies intelligence in the Creator. From this direct doubt which arises from a lack of spiritual insight,

which the psalmist more than once designates by the term foolish, we may turn to two modern difficulties of a philosophical character.

1. Can the self-existent, the independent God be dependent on the creature for the exercise of an attribute of His being? How can God know without something beyond Himself to be known? This is an objection which lies against all the attributes which relate God to His creatures. We can scarcely conceive of them as eternal capacities awaiting the birth of time, or as infinite potentialities never even yet fully exercised. So far as this particular attribute is concerned one might find an answer from philosophy itself in the idealism of Plato. Of this the beautifully religious and philosophical poetry of Proverbs viii. 22-31 seems almost an anticipation. But a fully developed Christian faith gives us the complete answer in John i. 1 expanded in John xvii. 5 and 24, ending with "thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world." Lest this should be ascribed to the mysticism of St. John, we have it in another form in Matt. xi. 27, "No man knoweth the Son save the Father, neither doth any know the Father save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son willeth to reveal him." We find here, as in many other questions, in the doctrine of the Trinity, the truth most peculiarly unveiled by religious faith, the key to the greatest difficulties of religious philosophy.

2. Another difficulty arises from the relation of God's knowledge to that contingency which is implied in free will. Here the intuition of the

moral consciousness, This is my act, I alone did it, I might have done otherwise, and I am responsible for not so doing, is opposed to the intuition of the religious consciousness, God knows this act, and He knew it before I did it. First let us note that the two intuitions when stated as above in simple terms, and not in forms borrowed from philosophy, are not directly contradictory. It can only be said that they seem to imply a contradiction. Until we understand more fully the relation of God's entire being including His knowledge to the sequences of time, we cannot certainly know whether such contradiction really exists. Both religious faith and moral conviction might therefore very safely permit this question to stand among the many mysteries to which our imperfect knowledge has not yet attained. In the meantime we must not quarrel with, or despise the legitimate ambition of philosophy to find an answer to her own difficulty. The doctrine of an "eternal now" combined with the intuitive character of all Divine knowledge represents one of these efforts. The distinction of all the objects of Divine knowledge as necessary, free, and potential represents another effort at solution. A third proposes to limit the religious intuition by saying that God does not will to know our free acts, that He voluntarily leaves them outside His knowledge that they may be free. While this may satisfy the moral intuition, it certainly does not answer the philosophical question, which is not concerning the actuality, but concerning the possibility of such

knowledge, and it at the same time contradicts the religious faith which especially extends the Divine knowledge to these moral acts. In the present state of the question it would be a very great mistake to pin our religious faith to any one of these speculations or link them in with our theology. They however serve to shew us the true bearing of the question, and to convince us that it presents no insuperable difficulty to either the moral or the religious convictions which are supposed to be incompatible.

Omnipotence.

The idea expressed by the words power, efficiency and cause, is one of the most fundamental of our conceptions. It arises within us by a necessity of our thought, perhaps in connection with the conscious exertion of will, and the sense of its freedom. In general the idea arises wherever in the physical world we see motion, and in the wider field wherever we see results which experience teaches us to associate with movement or with will, including purpose.

This attribute is probably the very first which the human mind in its exercise of religious faith associates with the presence of God; it is that by which the presence of God first becomes manifest.

The first form under which this attribute is grasped by our religious faith is the ascription to God of all existent power and efficiency. This is set forth in Scripture in the most direct

and simple words, "All things were made by Him and without Him was not anything made that was made," John i. 3; "Upholding all things by the word of His power," Heb. i. 3. "In Him all things consist," Col. i. 16. "In Him we live, move, and have our being," Acts xvii. 28. "Who worketh all things according to the counsel of His will," Eph. i. 11.

From this faith easily rises to the conception of an inexhaustible fountain of power. As experience finds no limit to the exercise of Divine power in fact, so faith cannot consent to limit its possibility. The Scriptures express this also in simple and direct language as Jer. xxxii. 17, "Behold Thou has made the heaven and the earth by Thy great power and by Thy stretched out arm; there is nothing too hard for Thee." So the faith of Abraham is stimulated by the question, "Is anything too hard for the Lord?" Gen. xviii. 14.

It is scarcely needful to add that this idea of infinite power is extended to moral and spiritual efficiency as well as to that which is physical (Eph. i. 19, etc.).

It is a most essential part of this religious faith, that this power is exercised as a personal will, and not as a force acting under a law of necessity. When the Psalmist says, "Our God is in the heavens, He hath done whatsoever He pleased" (Ps. cxv. 3, cxxxv. 6), he does not merely use an anthropomorphic form. The personal idea is an essential element of the

religious faith. A truly religious sentiment (which includes confidence and love), towards a blind force is a spiritual impossibility. Hence the full religious expression in such a passage as Rev. iv. 11, "Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive the honour and the glory and the power, for Thou didst create all things, and because of Thy will they were, and were created."

The questions, Can the power of God effect absurdities, or contradictions, or moral evil, are such as religious faith can never consider. To apply these to God would be to the devout spirit blasphemy.

Goodness.

The three attributes already considered form the foundation for those which follow and which contemplate God in His Divine activity,—goodness impels, wisdom guides, freedom acts.

Faith in God as good is one of the most obvious elements of all religions. The Saxon God, *i.e.* Good, is a witness to this. Man has an inherent faith in supreme goodness; the loss of this faith is the worst form of insanity. Yet experience teaches us that no attribute of God requires to be more accurately conceived and carefully defined to faith as well as to knowledge than this. In broad terms goodness may be defined as the fountain which produces well-being. But well-being is a relative and progressive thing. It begins with the lowest forms of material life, and rises through numberless

planes of being to the highest perfection of moral nature and of communion with God. True well-being thus varies with the nature of the being concerned. To a creature who has fallen below his privilege of being, there is ever present the danger of an interpretation of the goodness of God, fatal to his higher interests. For man in his faith in God to sink to the level of the brute would be deadly sin. These things he is exhorted to intrust to the universal care of God; his struggle is to be toward higher things. "Seek ye first His Kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you."

The far-reaching view opened up to us in modern science, in which all nature from its lowest to its highest forms, stands before us in an almost eternal and inexorable struggle from the lower to the higher plane, should itself cause us to approach this subject with the most serious consideration.—

This attribute as presented to religious faith in the Scripture—

1. Sets God forth as the author of all well-being.

2. It represents this as proceeding from an inherent motive, a spring of benevolence as well as of beneficence in His being.

To both these ideas of the Divine goodness the inspired scriptures give most ample expression. In the Old Testament the opening document in Genesis pictures the work of Creation as the pleasure of God in His work as good, and as

practically devising that which is good for man. In the heart of the Mosaic revelation, we have embodied a remarkable declaration of the Divine goodness in Ex. xxxiv. 6: "The Lord, the Lord, a God full of compassion and gracious, slow to anger, and plenteous in mercy and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin." As is quite natural in a book of hymns of religious worship, the psalms are full of the praises of the Divine goodness. The theme and refrain of more than one entire psalm is contained in the words, "O give thanks unto the Lord for He is good, for His mercy endureth for ever." Of another the refrain is, "O that men would praise the Lord for His goodness, and for His wonderful works to the children of men!" Another declares that "the earth is full of the loving-kindness of the Lord"; and this tone throughout is so characteristic as to make the religion of the Old Testament emphatically a religion of light and gladness, not in a low sensuous form, but as arising out of a calm, strong, and joyous faith in a God who is supremely good. The ministry of the Hebrew prophets was pre-eminently a ministry of correction of sin, and of support of God's people in the conflict and sorrow of life; but it never lost sight of this supreme faith as a ground of inspiration to better things, of consolation in trouble, as well as of joyous confidence under all circumstances in life. A single passage of remarkable poetic beauty from Jeremiah, the weeping prophet, may

serve as an example. "They shall come and sing in the height of Zion, and shall flow together unto the goodness of the Lord, to the corn, and to the wine, and to the oil, and to the young of the flock and of the herd; and their soul shall be as a watered garden; and they shall not sorrow any more at all" (Jer. xxxi. 12).

We cannot omit two others.

"How great is goodness! and how great is his beauty!
Corn shall make the young men flourish
And new wine the maids." ZECH. ix. 17.

"For though the fig tree shall not blossom,
Neither shall fruit be in the vines,
The labour of the olive shall fail
And the fields shall yield no meat;
The flock shall be cut off from the fold
And there shall be no herd in the stalls;
Yet will I rejoice in the Lord,
I will joy in the God of my salvation.
Jehovah my God is my strength,
And He will make my feet like hinds' feet.
He will make me to walk upon my high places."
HAB. iii. 17-19.

Even the light and merry optimism of the Greeks in their palmiest days was not more buoyant than this religious faith. But no exposition of the goodness of God is more complete than that given by our Lord Himself. His conception of the goodness of God was such that in comparison none other could be called good; Matt. xix. 17. This conception was embodied in the designation which He never failed to employ,

"Our Father." It made all prayer easy and confident. And it rose pre-eminent above both the merits and even the sins of men; Matt. v. 45; vii. 11. The Lord's ideas are reflected in Jas. i. 17: "Every good gift and every perfect boon is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom can be no variation, neither shadow that is cast by turning."

The mistakes of an imperfect religious faith in the goodness of God arise not so much from an overestimate of this attribute, as from severing it from the full unity of the Divine attributes. A goodness which is not in harmony with the truth of things, with the right, and with the wisdom which chooses the best ends and seeks them by the best means, is not a true goodness. It is evil, not good. And yet such is the goodness which we in our blindness and sinfulness too often seek, and which we would even dare to expect from God. It is needless to say that such religious faith has failed to find the truth.

Out of our study of this attribute as revealed to religious faith, there naturally arises the question, Does this faith demand an optimism? There can be no doubt that the spirit of optimism is closely allied to that of religion, and that pessimism lies at the furthest remove from Christianity. Even the ancient myth-forming spirit indulged in optimistic dreams, such as the golden age, and the garden of Hesperides.

If we construe optimism to mean the sum-total

of all good, then it is certain that this has not been given to a finite creature, nor in a finite world. In fact the gift of all good by creative act would be the production not of a finite creature but of the counterpart of God Himself which is an impossibility, as there cannot be two infinite beings although there may be two infinite persons, one in essence. Nor does the true religious spirit in the creature demand such an optimism. It asks, it seeks, it aspires to ever higher good, but ever according to its measure, according to that which it "can ask and think." To express it in the terms of our latest philosophy, it is ever aspiring towards its ideal, but the ideal itself grows with its moral and spiritual growth.

The true optimism guided by the humble and thankful yet aspiring religious spirit demands—

1. That all God's work should be, in its measure and after its kind, good.

2. That throughout its entire scale of being there should be an open highway ascending to the more perfect good. Probably in this way alone can the most complete, and the highest universal order be constituted. This is the central and universal principle of which we have a special application in Rom. viii. 28. It brings the creature nearer to the creator, by giving it, not passive reception of good, but active effort toward good, thus imparting to it even in its lowest forms something akin to creative energy in itself. In the moral creature it rises to a true Divine image and likeness. It is needless to say how completely

our highest modern science asserts such an optimism.

The problem of evil is another very ancient question which arises in connection with the study of this attribute. The presence of evil in the world, and still more the suffering of evil in personal experience has in every age been a sore trial to religious faith, as well as a difficult problem to religious thought. The ancient philosophies all fall back upon—

1. An eternal principle of evil, an evil being or beings standing opposed to the good; or,

2. The ascription of evil to the influence of matter which is also regarded as eternal. It is evident that this is not a solution of the question; it merely pushes it back into the obscurity of the past. Its inconsistency with the highest religious faith is also apparent from the resort of the Magian philosophy, which was highly religious, to the teaching that this evil would be finally overcome. With the Christian faith they are absolutely inconsistent, inasmuch as they both limit God, the one by dividing the creative power with an antagonistic force of evil, the other by making him dependent upon co-existent material.

Instead of these the true religious spirit finds the solution in the voice of conscience. Evil is the result of sin; and this intuition of religious conscience is the consistent and uniform teaching of Scripture. It affirms as existent facts—

1. The sin of higher moral intelligences.

2. Through their temptation the sin of man.

These facts, their verity, and their results will be considered in full hereafter. It is here sufficient to say that they constitute the real evil of the universe.

On the other hand the problem of pain is somewhat different. A superficial view has long been disposed to make pain always the result of sin. That it is frequently so is doubtless true, and is abundantly recognised in Scripture. But we doubt whether Scripture teaches that it is universally so, or even that apart from sin, pain would not have existed. The friends of Job insisted on connecting his suffering with sin, but his conscience and his faith both protested against their cruel theory. He himself fell back upon the mysterious order of God whose working and reasons are so far beyond our comprehension, but not without glimpses of a faith which found even in pain a higher good. This latter point the New Testament emphatically asserts, and it is especially prominent in the teaching of St Paul; 2 Cor. iv. 17, 18. The highest triumph of religious faith is this joy in tribulations. Rom. v. 3; Heb. xii. 11.

Wisdom.

This attribute contemplates God in relation to action, and it combines His omniscience with His goodness and the moral attributes yet to be considered, in choosing the ends of Divine action and the best means for the accomplishment of those ends. Wisdom thus expresses the entire relation of God to action, including perfect motive,

perfect choice, and perfect means and method of work. It includes both the intellectual and the moral side of action. The Hebrew mind viewed it largely from the moral side; the modern tendency is to view it too largely from the intellectual side. The perfection of the Divine attribute includes both, and is at once the strength of the universe and the salvation of man. "O Lord, how manifold are Thy works! in wisdom hast Thou made them all: the earth is full of Thy riches," Ps. civ. 24.

The general scriptural presentation of the wisdom of God arises from the devout contemplation of His works in creation, providence, and redemption. The hundred and fourth Psalm from which we have just quoted is a conspicuous example of the first, as are also the discourses in Proverbs iii. and viii., and many passages in Job.

The New Testament as is natural deals more largely with the wisdom of God in the work of redemption. St Paul is the great expositor of this theme. To his mind Christ is "the wisdom of God"; and in Him "are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge," Col. ii. 3; and the unfolding of this wisdom in all its varied fulness in the history of the Church, is matter for the contemplation not of men alone, but of "the principalities and powers in heavenly places," Eph. iii. 10. And after through three chapters he has traced one aspect of this wisdom along the course of the dispensations, he closes with this note of admiring faith, "O the depth of the

riches both of the wisdom and the knowledge of God."

But the point of view in which the writers of Scripture seem especially to delight is that of considering all true wisdom of men as the gift of God. In the Hebrew ideal this gift ranked highest of all endowments. Physical strength, agility and beauty, courage, eloquence, and poetic and artistic skill were all appreciated as among other ancient people. But "wisdom is the principal thing," "her price is above rubies," and "all the things thou canst desire are not to be compared to her." Their language was exceedingly rich in terms to express this gift. No less than seven words express various shades of the idea from technical skill to the profound discernment of moral intuition, and from subtle craft, to the quiet strength of calm calculation. But all this variety of highest power in man, the power to choose and attain to ends is bestowed by God. And His wisdom infinitely transcends the human capacity. Against the unerring perfection of His methods of work no human device avails; and the only true human wisdom is that which recognises, acknowledges and fears God and keeps His commandments, in other words, works under and in harmony with him. No literature, not even our modern natural theology has carried this conception of Divine wisdom to a higher point than is thus given in Job xxviii. 12, etc.; xxxvi. 5; xxxviii. 37, 38; Ps. civ. 24, Prov. viii. 22, etc.; Rom. xi. 33; Eph. i. 8; iii. 10. In all

these passages the Divine spirit in man leads to the highest conception of God, and there is no exhibition of Divine skill more wonderful than that which "puts wisdom in our inward parts."

Freedom.

Freedom is an ultimate element in our conscious spiritual activity. It cannot be analysed or defined. This consciousness arises in connection with our voluntary acts with more or less distinctness, and in its turn lays the foundation for our sense of responsibility. We can thus only describe the conditions under which it arises, and refer each individual to his own experience of its presence in himself.

1. It arises only in the exercise of will and hence is characteristic of will.

2. It is most distinctly present when we are most deliberate and self-conscious in action, when motive, purpose, and choice are most distinctly in exercise. It is less fully present when our action partakes of the nature of instinctive impulse, and entirely absent in automatic or reflexive action, such as the closing of the eye in the presence of a blow. It is also absent from acts performed under the compulsion of physical force, if such can be called acts, as distinct from mere motions. Even the application of motives against which we are consciously without power, interferes with the sense of freedom. Hence we are astonished at the moral strength which enables a man to endure torture, and for acts performed under its com-

pulsion we do not hold him responsible beyond human power to endure.

3. The self-consciousness which gives us the clearest sense of freedom is that which includes motives distinctly apprehended; a free act always implies a motive.

4. It implies further the exercise of either rational or moral judgment upon motive; or in most cases both. These judgments in their turn become a new motive purely spiritual, *i.e.* directing us from within in distinction from desire which draws us to something without ourselves. The act in the presence of this higher motive, this direction of will by our own higher nature, arises to the dignity of a free act, and becomes a simple determination for or against the higher motive. In its ultimate analysis this sense of freedom can only arise in the presence of the higher rational and moral nature; and it implies not only obligation, *i.e.* the motive force of the higher nature, but also power to determine action, to do or not to do, as reason and conscience direct. The act is thus not a mere resultant of motive forces from without or within, but is essentially our own act performed by our own power of will. It is here distinctly that our consciousness of freedom appears.

5. This act of determination finites the act, *i.e.* defines or determines it, as to time, place, quality, and degree; in other words, it fixes the when, the where, the what, and the how great of the act. It is this peculiarity which dis-

tinguishes will from all necessitated action. Necessitated action is determined by cause in all these particulars; and in the cause there is no power to define, it simply transmits the force of which it is the bearer. It cannot but be when, where, and what it is. Voluntary action can be or not be, can be what it chooses within the limits of its power. In the act thus produced there is a sense of origination, of selfhood asserted, and at least to some extent of independent action or beginning, which is nearly allied to the idea of creation. In this consciousness of freedom we have our nearest experience of an absolute beginning. Freedom is thus the expression of our deepest selfhood, the centre of responsibility and personality, the exercise of all our powers of reason, emotion, moral nature and will. It is the perfect man in action. It makes our act our own. But in our case it implies something objective to our personality as well; an occasion furnishing a motive to action. But the essence of freedom lies not in the presence of this not me. That is the badge of our finiteness. If that alone were present, our act would not be free. Freedom asserts itself to govern, and if need be to overcome this. It springs out of the reason and moral nature of the living spirit, and the not me is but the occasion needed by a finite and dependent spirit.

Having thus endeavoured to clear our conception of freedom, the question arises, Can we attribute this quality of freedom to God either

as existing from all eternity or as acting in time? Our answer to this question must be first of all from the religious consciousness especially as expressed in Scripture. We may then consider the reasonableness of such a faith.

1. There can be no doubt that the religious consciousness of humanity in all the ages has recognised God, not as a mere necessary force or power in the universe, but as a free personality. This is involved in all the important active relations of God to the world. It had a beginning, He determined that beginning. It has its course of history, He governs and guides that course. The same thing is implied in all the religious relations of humanity to God. We fear, reverence, trust, pray to, love, obey, not a blind force, but a personal God.

2. The Old Testament Scriptures open with the sublime conception of creation. This work certainly implies all the results or characteristics of a free act. It is not simply the going forth of infinite or of finite energy to effect a result; it is power willing, and so beginning to act (*a*) at a definite time, (*b*) in a definite place, (*c*) to a defined and limited result. All the terms in which this is set forth, both in Gen. i. and Ps. civ., as well as elsewhere, are such as apply only to a free act. In the same way the Scriptures set forth the providence of God in a way that implies pre-eminently the action of a free personality, and not the effect of mere force. Motives, intelligence, moral judgment, as well as absolute

authority are all ascribed to Him, and the final faith of His people is expressed thus, "Our God is in the heavens; He hath done whatsoever He hath pleased." Compare Ps. x. 12-18; xxii. 28, etc; Isa. xl. 12, etc. But for the highest conception of this attribute, we must again turn to the New Testament in such passages as Rom. ix.-xi. and Eph. i., where the good pleasure of the wise, holy, and loving God guides the course of all worlds, all ages, and all dispensations.

Not the sovereignty of God merely, but the freedom which is a more comprehensive and adequate term is thus a fundamental part of religious faith.

Before we can grasp the reasonableness of this faith it will be necessary as far as possible to discover in what respects God's freedom differs from ours. To do this we must anticipate for a moment a perfection of the Divine being yet to be considered, the self-sufficiency of God. To all our actions as finite beings a not me, some external object is necessary. God as self-sufficient can create His own object of action. No element of religious faith is more prominent than this. The whole religious heart of humanity asserts that to help with or without means is all the same to God. We have indeed abused this faith by calling in creative or miraculous power where God proceeds according to the law which He has already ordained for His works. But while religious faith in its imperfection may have needlessly invoked this principle, all philosophy and all science

must recognise its presence, if ever it is to reach a world existing in time.

This self-sufficiency renders the freedom of God truly perfect freedom. The truth by which a free act is directed, the right by which it is governed, the power by which it is effected, and the end to which it is directed, are all in and of Himself. "All things have been created through Him and unto Him," Col. i. 16. The Divine freedom is thus an absolute freedom, His acts alone being in the most complete sense in and from Himself.

Again God's freedom is a perfect freedom, inasmuch as all the conditions of freedom are in Him perfect. His knowledge is perfect truth, His moral judgments are the perfect right, His power is almighty, and His goodness and wisdom are alike perfect. There is no darkness in Him and no weakness, and no changing uncertainty of will. We with our blind hesitating, tempted wills cannot conceive of the perfect will into which all perfections of being enter in a perfect harmony and unity of action.

It is sometimes said that God acts out of the necessity of His own being. To us this expression seems to involve either an error or a misuse of terms. If it implies that the Divine activity proceeds without an act of will, then the idea lands us in an eternal Pantheistic evolution. The Universe is infinite as God and eternal as God, and creation and time and beginning are all misnomers. If, on the other hand, the expression

signifies that God cannot be other than He is holy and wise and good, etc., then it is a misuse of terms for necessity applies to act or movement not to being and attribute. It is the very essence of freedom that the being out of its own attributes or powers should govern the act.

It would thus appear that there is nothing unreasonable in the ascription of freedom to God. In fact to Him alone can it be applied in the most perfect and absolute sense.

The Moral Attributes of God.

The attributes by which God is related to His moral creatures may be stated as truth, holiness, and love. As these terms represent the highest things in man, so they represent the supreme relation of God to His creatures. They are thus applied to God as predicates in the language of Scripture after a manner distinct. The attributes of truth and right are united under the figurative term "light," which is a favourite term of St John to denote the principles of truth and right as guiding human life. And these he speaks of, not simply as coming from God, but as expressing His very character; "God is light, and in Him is no darkness at all," 1 John i. 5. A little further on he uses the same form in regard to the third attribute, "God is love," 1 John iv. 8, etc. These attributes are thus declared to be of the very essence as it were of God. It is never said, God is goodness, or intelligence, or power. All these belong to Him as a spirit; but the infinite

fountain of being in Him lies deeper; He is light, the light of truth and right, and He is love. These united attributes must therefore form the very centre of our conception of God. Like freedom they are intimately related to the Divine personality, and will prepare us for its consideration.

Truth.

Truth, first of all, expresses the perfect quality of the ideas formed in our minds in the exercise of intelligence; it denotes the correspondence of the idea to reality. Truth is the proper content of perfect knowledge. In this sense truth is capable of being considered as objective to the knowing mind, we contemplate it as something set over against ourselves who know it. But from this primary meaning arises a second and purely subjective application of the term to designate an essential moral quality of the knowing mind itself, the moral aspect of intelligence. This moral quality in ourselves is first of all a feeling or sense of certainty, assurance, confidence, strength in the knowledge of the truth. It is, in the second place, the joy or pleasure of this certainty, satisfaction in the truth. In the third place it is desire for the truth; and finally, it is loyal fidelity to truth which makes all truth a matter of moral obligation. It leads us to maintain the truth, to confess the truth, to present the truth, and with self-sacrificing toil and sincere honesty to seek the truth. This is the truth in

man, and represents our proper relation as spiritual beings to ideal truth. It is that quality of our being which is satisfied with, delights in and desires objective truth, and which abhors and turns from all falsity, and seeks to avoid all error. It is clearly to be distinguished from fidelity to promise; but is practically expressed in obligation to speak the truth, both as to outward things and the thoughts and intents of our own hearts.

Truth, both from the objective and the subjective side, thus becomes the very foundation of all knowledge, and hence the very foundation of all spiritual life. If our knowing is mere subjective seeming, sham, dreaming, then all life is a falsity, and hollow and empty. It is not wonderful therefore that at the very foundation of all religious faith, lies this sacred confidence, God is a God of truth. This foundation alone constitutes the strength of our life, and makes it soul-satisfying. We have already seen that the distinction between religious faith and superstition lies in this, that the first is founded in truth, fact, reality; the other on error or falsehood. As all religious faith takes hold of God, God must therefore be a true God, and in Himself the truth, and a God of truth; not merely one who really exists, but one who exists in true Godhead, and one whose every thought is the *eidos*, the perfect prototype of reality, one who rejoices in all truth, and one who cannot lie. In such a God alone can all things consist.

These relations of truth in God to His creatures and to their faith in Him are abundantly presented in Scripture. It stands with the justice and goodness of God as the firm foundation of religious faith: Ex. xxxiv. 6; Deut. xxxii. 4; Ps. lxxxvi. 15. It is everlasting, Ps. c. 5; cxvii. 2; cxlvi. 6. It marks all God's ways, Ps. xxv. 5; and His judgments, xcvi. 13; Isa. xlii. 3; and His law, cxix. 142; and God's eyes are upon the truth which He loves, Jer. v. 3.

The New Testament, if possible, carries this ideal still higher. God is a spirit and must be worshipped in spirit and in truth, John iv. 24. Christ is Himself the truth, John xiv. 6; and is the witness of the truth, John xviii. 37; and reveals the truth, John i. 14-17; and this truth is the supreme concern of man, John viii. 32; 1 Tim. ii. 4.

This attribute of God brings us into the region of purely spiritual and religious life as distinguished from the physical and natural. The conception of God derived from nature, includes power, skill, and beneficent provisions, and finds in God the counterpart of these things. But as we have seen these do not bring us into touch with the deepest nature of God. In fact, if our faith penetrates no further; if it does not rise to the moral and spiritual, the God whom we thus worship may be but that which the Hebrews called "Elilim," "no gods." To worship God as God we must "worship Him in spirit and in truth," and in the beauty of holiness.

This attribute in God makes fidelity to all truth one of the most essential of the religious virtues. It demands of the religious soul not only the utmost fidelity in maintaining, but the most perfect candour in receiving the truth. This is the meaning of those significant words of the Master, "Everyone that is of the truth heareth My voice."

When we predicate truth as an attribute of God, we first of all affirm that God as the Author of all Being, *i.e.* of all reality, is Himself the fountain-head of all truth. The truth as it exists in all the universe is but the reflection of the truth as from eternity it exists in Him. It is sometimes asked, Is right right because God hath so ordered or determined it? or, Is there an eternal right? So it may be asked, Is there eternal Truth? Is Truth fixed by necessity? Or is Truth determined by an act of Divine will? The answer to this is that God, and Right, and Truth are one. In Scripture words, "God is light," the light of eternal right and truth. All truth is in Him, and cannot even in our thought be separated from Him. While God is God, truth will be truth. And while truth is truth, God will be God. God is truth. In all truth there is something of God. And this truth in God is a foremost element of that personality out of which God acts in the exercise of His freedom. The link which binds the truth of finite things to eternal truth in God, is not one of necessary evolution, but of personal will. And thus all finite exhibition of truth takes its finite form from

the will of God. But to religious faith even these finite forms are sacred as the embodiment of the eternal, the immutable, and the Divine. Religious faith thus finds in the truth of God the ground for that universal confidence in the steadfastness and strength of God's world, and in the reality of all things phenomenal, which gives foundation to our whole spiritual life.

Holiness.

As by the attribute of truth we identify religion with the highest reason, so by the attribute of holiness we unite religion with the perfect moral goodness. Religion demands truth and righteousness, and believes in truth and righteousness, because God is true and holy.

The attempt is sometimes made to define this attribute by analysing it into various aspects of moral relationship, as distributive justice, rectoral justice, punitive justice, fidelity to promise, etc. But all these do not so much make up or constitute the holiness of God, as serve as illustrations of it. They are but forms in which it is exercised, and the variety of the forms it is scarcely possible to enumerate. It is better, therefore, to contemplate the holiness of God as the glorious moral perfection of His being, out of which all moral law and order springs. It is that which corresponds to, and satisfies the sense of right within ourselves by which we apprehend the moral quality of all spiritual being and activity. As our religious faith asserts in God perfect knowledge, almighty power,

perfect goodness and truth, so does it believe in Him as perfectly, gloriously holy.

In man, perfect holiness is complete consecration to the service of God as the all-inclusive duty, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind" (Matt. xxii. 37). This definition cannot be applied to God. He cannot be set apart to the service of any, inasmuch as He is over all. But He is separate from all evil and moral imperfection; and He is not set apart to, but identical in His very being with all moral perfection. Our highest moral excellence is but a feeble image of the unapproachable glory of His holiness.

All right is founded in truth. There can be no right which has not truth, fact, reality as its basis. That God is holy is inseparably connected with the fact that He is a God of truth. The right is that in action which corresponds to truth in the understanding. Truth in knowledge is right because it is truth. All right is truth, and all truth is right. They are in their deepest nature one as they exist in God, and as God is one. The man who is most deeply penetrated by the sense of both one and the other is most like God. The right and the true constitute the place of our profoundest worship. It is before the splendour of God's truth and holiness that our entire being bows with adoring reverence. As by religious faith St John beheld the truth and holiness of God shining into human understanding, he says:

"God is light, and in Him is no darkness at all." "If we walk in the light, as He is in the light, we have fellowship, one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ, His Son, cleanseth us from all sin." "Yea, and our fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son, Jesus Christ: and these things we write that our joy may be fulfilled." These attributes of God thus enter into the highest religious life.

In the Old Testament the attribute of moral perfection in God is presented as holiness, justice, and righteousness; holiness in His temple which is holy because of His presence, justice in His judgments and law, righteousness in all His moral government and providential administration. From the beginning of the history of Israel this attribute is a most prominent part of their religious faith. Their first impressions are those of righteous judgment. At the Red Sea God is "glorious in holiness, fearful in praises, doing wonders," Ex. xv. 11. The revelation of Sinai by which the nation was founded was emphatically a revelation of holiness, and from this time forward, all religion, all law, and all ethics proceeded from the central thought of God as a holy God and His people as a holy people; Lev. xi. 44. The word used in the Hebrew language to express this idea signifies to be bright, new, fresh, clean, as nature in the spring or after rain, hence the beauty of holiness. It is in God an unapproachable moral perfection; He is glorious in holiness. This is the positive

side; and the negative corresponds, free from spot and stain, separate from all defilement. This is the condition of all human approach to the God of holiness (Isa. vi. 3-7). And hence in every age as to-day the vision of this holy God unveils to us all the sinfulness of our own hearts and lives, and humbles us in the dust before Him (Isa. vi. 5). Thus while to the Greeks, with whom the æsthetic ideal was most prominent, the beautifully good, *το καλοκαγαθον*, was the object of admiration; to the Hebrews, to whose consciousness the ethical ideal was more vivid, the glory of holiness is the object of profound, humble, reverent worship (Ps. xxix. 2).

The Spirit of God as the universal worker of all things in the universe is in the Old Testament as in the New, the Holy Spirit, and the Spirit of holiness. He is present in the beginning (Gen. i. 2); He garnishes the heavens (Job. xxvi. 13); and He gives life to man (Job xxxiii. 4). Rising to the moral sphere, He gives to man understanding, *i.e.* moral discernment, the sense of right (Gen. vi. 3; Job xxxii. 8; Ps. li. 11); and of truth (John xvi. 13). From this the step is easy to the full New Testament conception of the Holy Spirit as the sanctifier of the human heart and of the Church of God. The holiness of God working through the indwelling of His Holy Spirit in His creatures links religion with moral renewal, and cleanses from God's creation all the defilement of sin, and will finally present the new heavens and the new earth, the restored

moral order of the universe, beautiful with the glory of the holiness of God (Rev. xxi. 1-5).

Love.

This attribute is in a peculiar sense the supreme element of the New Testament revelation and of the Christian idea of God, "God is love." The Old Testament is possessed of elementary conceptions leading up to this great culmination. The idea there is still passing through its phases of development in the human mind, from instinct up through all the varied phases of human affection; and the terms expressive of these affections are applied to God. But these terms in Greek had become so intermingled with human and often sinful passion that they fell below the power of a pure religious conception; and in the New Testament, a new term, ἀγαπη, which already appears in the Septuagint, is consecrated to the higher idea of the expression of the love of God. This word seems to express not merely personal affection in a stronger sense than our word friendship, but a passion for doing good. Benevolence is too abstract, it lacks the personal character, and hence the depth of feeling embodied in Divine charity. The New Testament word comes to us, perhaps, allied to ἀγαθος, which makes it a spring of all doing of good, and to ἀγαμαι, signifying to admire, to respect, to prize, to esteem, giving the benevolent impulse a personal direction, founded on personal character. Thus severed from all sinful passion the word

becomes a fitting vehicle to express our regard for the Eternal Father, and His regard for us His children.

The attribute thus expressed like the more general conception of the goodness of God is an impelling motive to action; not as a compulsion, or obligation, but as a joyous and strong desire. It longs to bless the objects of its love, and in this desire it knows no limit; it gladly gives all that it possesses. It is the very opposite of selfishness; it is self-sacrifice. It forgets all self in the supreme delight of the blessedness of the object of its love.

But this love in its very nature as a personal affection asks return. It blesses and delights in blessing, but it takes with equal joy the cup of blessing from the hand of love. It is a joy in giving and a joy in receiving. Love is thus the most intimate communion of spirit with spirit. As it gives all and takes all, in perfect love there arises a perfect unity as well as a perfect joy of life. Love thus becomes the highest moral perfection. It is truth, justice, right, all on a higher platform, in a word, the love of God is perfect holiness. When we ascribe love as an attribute to God, it implies that from all eternity there exists with God a person of His love, one to whom He imparts all the fulness and blessedness of His own being, and from whom He receives all the infinite fulness of love in return (John xvii. 24). It is well worthy of note that the revelation to us of this eternal Son is made at the same

time as the revelation of the love of the Father, and in the same great work of human redemption (John iii. 16).

It also implies that in time God's creatures are the objects of His love as well as of His goodness. But goodness extends to all as partakers of well-being. Love is the relation of creatures partaking of the same nature, and extends to all who share in His image. And to all such God extends His love, and seeks from them love in return. If they make no return of Divine love and fall from the Divine love, by that very act they so far separate themselves from the love of God. We have already seen how completely the Old Testament sets forth the goodness of God. The recognition of Divine love is also not wanting there. The love of God is however there presented only under two forms, first as a love to the chosen people, which is largely set forth in Deuteronomy and in the later prophets and psalms; and again as love to the righteous and the saints and the upright in heart. The wider love which reaches even the sinner, and the infinite love which fills eternity is not yet revealed. The way for it is only opened by the revelation of a personal relation of God to His people and to those who are seeking Him with all their heart. The depth of feeling of this relation is expressed by the term loving-kindness, a word which combines goodness and mercy with love, uniting both in one wide view of the benevolent and beneficent nature of God. It is

from this Old Testament view that our Lord in the Sermon on the Mount commences to build that supreme view of the love of God which is the glory of Christianity. He is speaking to men, and pressing upon them their duty; "Love your enemies, and pray for them that persecute you; that ye may be sons of your Father which is in heaven; for He maketh His sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sendeth rain on the just and the unjust." "Ye therefore shall be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect." From this first comprehensive but practical beginning of this higher teaching He gradually leads them by His words, but still more by His life, which was the very incarnation of Divine love, and finally by His Spirit guiding them not only into the truth, but into the personal feeling of the Divine love, until John, the apostle of love, proclaims its breadth and fulness in such words as these, "God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on Him should not perish, but have eternal life; and Paul in such as this: "God commendeth His own love toward us in that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us."

But it is in our Lord's own last words that the infinite and eternal fulness of love as an attribute of God is opened up. "As the Father hath loved Me, so have I loved you." "Father, that which Thou hast given Me I will that, where I am, they also may be with Me; that they may behold My

glory which Thou hast given Me; for Thou lovedst Me before the foundation of the world." And yet this infinite and eternal love is not severed from God's love to man, for He goes on to pray "that the love wherewith Thou lovedst Me may be in them, and I in them." It is from such themes as these that St John rises to his supreme conception, the highest point to which religious faith has reached, "God is love."

CHAPTER III

THE PERFECTIONS OF GOD

THE doctrine of the Attributes would lead us directly to the consideration of the personality of God, but before turning to this, we must consider an element of religious faith which qualifies all the Attributes. This might be summed up in one word, perfection; but unless we turn our thoughts to at least some of the varied aspects of this perfection, our idea of it will be exceedingly limited.

It is the more necessary for us to make this study precede that of the personality, because it is often assumed that the perfection of God's being excludes personality. We should therefore know what the true conception of this perfection is as revealed in Scripture and to religious faith; and so must find its unity and harmony with the true idea of Divine personality.

We have used the plural to fix our attention upon the fulness and variety of the Divine perfection. But when we speak of the perfections of God, it must not be thought that we can enumerate these. We can only attempt to set forth in a very imperfect way some of the elements which are involved in a true religious

faith, and unfolded in the teaching of Scripture. The attempt must be exceedingly imperfect, for here both human thought and human language fail to express that which we feel, but which surpasses our highest thought. It is here especially that reason sometimes makes this limitation of human thought, or rather this limited and hence utterly imperfect human conception, contradict that which the heart feels as certain truth. It is, however, the limitations, and not the certainties of reason that seem to contradict our faith.

The movement of the human mind by which it arrives at the idea of the Divine perfections is twofold.

The first in order of development is that of religious faith. As this faith is positive, and grasps the great attributes of God, power, intelligence, goodness and rectitude, the perfections are first apprehended in concrete relation to these attributes. As faith apprehends and trusts in the power of God, it cannot limit its confidence; it desires, seeks and by faith rests in boundless power. As it stands in the presence of Divine intelligence, it instinctively recognises the infinite extent and the absolute perfection of His knowledge. As it turns to a Divine heart of goodness and love, as faith it cannot question the infinite fulness and the eternal and immutable steadfastness of that heart of unbounded goodness upon which we rely. And so in the conflict and sin of human affairs, even the old Greek mind so felt the immutability and indestructibility of justice, that it

could not but believe that it must be done. These elements of religious faith all assert themselves in this absolute form in the deeper and more earnest feelings of our religious nature.

What is thus given in religious feeling is confirmed by an entirely distinct process of reason. Reason like faith asserts power, causal energy; and as it traces this power back to its ultimate source, it can only rest in the eternal, the uncaused. To this uncaused it can set no limit, and it can conceive no change, as that which is the first of all must be itself eternal, and that which is the cause of all must be itself uncaused, so that which is the fountain of all must be itself inexhaustible, *i.e.* infinite. Reason thus leads if not to the infinite, eternal and unchangeable God, at least to such a first cause.

That the rational process follows the religious faith, and that the mind of man does not reach these highest conceptions apart from the influence of religious communion with God, and the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, appears evident from the fact that the Hebrew people, as represented in the book of Job and in the second Isaiah, as well as in many of the psalms have already reached it, while the Greeks and Hindoos, with a much more perfectly developed philosophy, did not distinctly attain to it. There lay in them all a concealed dualism, which limited their conception even of the first cause. Hebrew faith laid hold of the spiritual, and boldly grasped in that the all-sufficient source of all that is.

The scriptural conception of the Divine perfection can best be studied under its various elements, which may be imperfectly enumerated as follows:—Self-sufficiency, All-sufficiency, Eternity, Immensity, Infinity, Immutability and Unity.

Self-Sufficiency.

One of the most direct assertions of this perfection is found in Rom. xi. 34-36: "For who hath known the mind of the Lord? or who hath been His counsellor? or who hath first given to Him, and it shall be recompensed unto him again? For of Him, and through Him, and unto Him are all things. To Him be the glory for ever. Amen." Compare 1 Cor. viii. 6. The first of these passages is a simple outburst of religious emotion arising from the contemplation of the wonderful work of God in His providential government. It is the deep and overwhelming conviction that God derives His plans, His power, His being from none; that His ways are the outcoming of the fulness of His own being; that in Himself He possesses the infinite fulness that fills all things; that He depends on none; all depend on Him. The same vast conception forces itself upon our thought in the presence of the great works of nature, and is expressed in such passages as Isa. xl. 13, 14, 28. Here the creating Spirit not only informs and creates all, but understands all, and He, "the everlasting God, the Lord, the Creator of the ends of the earth, fainteth not,

neither is weary; there is no searching of His understanding. On the other hand, it is the course of moral government which calls out from Bildad such exclamations as these: "Dominion and fear are with Him. He maketh peace in His high places. Is there any number of His armies? and upon whom doth not His light arise?" Job xxv. 2, 3. Both are perhaps combined in the words of Elihu; Job xxxv. 5-7. By such steps as these, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, the minds of these men were led to a faith which grasped very firmly the idea of a God whose boundless resources of being are in and of Himself alone, who owes nought to any, but is "before all things" since "by Him all things consist."

There are two terms in which philosophy has attempted to express this perfection; these are "necessary being," and "absolute being." Both these terms seem to us inadequate and possibly misleading. If by necessary being is intended nothing more than that it is not possible that God should not be, then there is no objection to the idea, but it by no means expresses the religious faith which grasps the self-sufficiency of God. If, on the other hand, it contemplates the existence of God as arising by fate, then that very thought of arising, becoming, even though it be carried back through the infinity of an eternal series, involves an element of error. God does not become, He is. Jehovah, "I am" is His name. So if by absolute being is intended

only to say that God does not depend on any, there is again no objection to the term, though as before it is but the negative side of a religious faith which finds in God an infinite fulness. But if it is so construed as to deny all possibility of relation, either in His own being or by the creation of a finite world which coming from Himself, is still in some proper sense other than Himself, then it involves serious error, inasmuch as it, by implication, strips God of all that constitutes spiritual existence. This absolute unrelated essence without an object can neither know, love, nor act. It becomes a virtual zero. On the other hand, the postulate of religious faith may be summed up thus:—

1. God is without derivation, in, of, and by Himself alone.

2. There is none beside Him who is not dependent on Him.

3. His existence is without contingency, it cannot and never could fail to be.

4. It is without limit, and cannot be made less than it is.

5. That being which He thus possesses in and of Himself, without derivation, without contingency, without limit, is the fulness of all being.

All-Sufficiency.

This perfection must not be confused with omnipotence. Omnipotence is all-sufficient power. The same perfection qualifies all the other attributes, intelligence, goodness, etc., as well as power

As thus qualifying all the Divine attributes it becomes another aspect of self-sufficiency, inasmuch as the "all" is not simply the finite all of Creation in time, but the infinite all of God Himself in eternity. God alone is the measure of God.

Philosophy has not usually distinguished this perfection from omnipotence, and hence has not enlarged or modified its idea. On the other hand, it is continually present in the scriptural view of the infinite resources of God, especially in such points as the following:—

1. God is cause of all things that are, that have been, or that may yet exist. Thus He "upholds all things by the word of His power"; "by Him all things consist," Col. i. 16. "He doeth great things and unsearchable, marvellous things without number," Job v. 9.

2. There is no limit to His wisdom to devise or His power to effect, or His goodness to bestow.

3. He is independent of all aid or condition from without Himself; Job ix. 12; Isa. xliii. 13.

The all-sufficiency of God is expressed in the Old Testament by the name El Shaddai; Gen. xvii. 1, "I am the Almighty God; walk before Me, and be thou perfect." This title becomes the foundation of the covenant promises to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob; Gen. xxviii. 3; xxxv. 11, as distinguished from Jehovah, the name by which God was distinguished from the

non-existent gods of the heathen; Ex. vi. 3. It thus enters into the very foundations of religious faith; and it is worthy of remark that the same idea appears in our Lord's agony in Gethsemane, as given in Mark xiv. 36: "Father, all things are possible unto Thee." We have also already observed it in the strong expression of religious feeling of Paul, Rom. xi. 36; which finds a parallel in his discourse before the Areopagites at Athens, Acts xvii. 25.

Eternity.

It is an easy step from the idea of God as before all things, the Creator of all, giving to all their being, and as possessing in and of Himself alone the fulness of all being, having as it is expressed by our Lord (John v. 26), "life in Himself," to the conception of the eternal God. But while this idea of eternity antecedent may arise by deduction, the thought of the everlasting God is wrapped up in all strong religious faith. And so in the emotional and devotional language of Scripture, no other perfection is more frequently or strongly expressed than this. Thus the Psalmist declares, "Even from everlasting to everlasting Thou art God," Ps. xc. 2; and again, "Thy years are throughout all generations," and "Thou art the same, and Thy years shall have no end," Ps. cii. 24-27. In a remarkably strong passage setting God before His people in the perfection of His being, He is represented as saying, "I live for ever," Deut. xxxii. 40. Isaiah in a

similar strain presents Him as "The high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity," Isa. lvii. 15.

It is with the same profound reverence and adoration of the perfection of God that Paul speaks in 1 Tim. vi. 15, 16. St Peter returns to the standpoint of assurance of religious faith in the promises, when he says, "Forget not this one thing, beloved, that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day." The passage is, we think, to be taken in a purely religious sense, and not as the announcement of a metaphysical fact.

A philosophical theology has presented this perfection as the doctrine of the "eternal now." This conception is however attended with great difficulty to most minds. By a law of our spiritual being all our conceptions are formed under the forms of time and space. These in themselves imply succession, extension, division, and hence limitation. Doubtless God in the mode of His being transcends these limitations, though the creature cannot do so. But in so doing, does He not pass beyond our power to think of Him? It may be that His knowledge of eternity past and future is not a memory on the one side or an inference on the other, but an intuition in which all is alike present to Him, but how this can be we cannot conceive; and while it may be an accommodation to the limitation of our thoughts and language, yet the words of Scripture present God to us in thoughts and forms which bear the impress of time and space.

Immensity.

This word is used in modern theology to express the fact that the being of God transcends the limits of space, as well as of time. In the older writers the idea was conveyed by the word infinity, which is now used in a wider sense. The later word is closer to the scriptural presentation, which is made in such words as these, "Behold heaven, and the heaven of heavens cannot contain thee," 2 Chron. vi. 18. The attribute however must always be viewed in relation to the omnipresence of God which as we have seen is the infinite and undivided fulness of His being in every place.

Infinity.

This term is used to carry the perfection of God beyond all degree, as the two previous words carry it beyond the limitations of time and space. It finds striking expression in Job xi. 7-9, "Canst thou by searching find out God? Canst thou find out the Almighty unto perfection? It is high as heaven; what canst thou do? Deeper than Sheol, what canst thou know? The measure thereof is longer than the earth, and broader than the sea." In Ps. cxlvii. 5, this perfection is directly applied to the Divine Knowledge, as also in Isa. xl. 28, "There is no searching of His understanding." From this the application is easy to all the moral attributes. A true religious faith cannot possibly ascribe to God

defect or limitation, and humbly acknowledges and rejoices in the fact that He immeasurably surpasses all our thought; Eph. iii. 19, 20. As might be expected from the limitations of our language, this perfection is usually expressed in negative terms. The infinity of holiness is the exclusion of all unrighteousness, John vii. 18. The infinity of Divine intelligence is without darkness, 1 John i. 5. In Deuteronomy xxxii. 4, positive perfection, and the negation of all imperfection are both combined to set forth the greatness of God. A figurative but remarkably suggestive presentation of this perfection is given in 1 Tim. vi. 16, where, in relation to the limitation of our powers of thought, the all perfect God is spoken of as "dwelling in light unapproachable; whom no man hath seen nor can see." This perfection is the basis of the Scripture doctrine that God is "unsearchable," a term which expresses the residue of truth which remains in the modern doctrine of the unknowable.

In Scripture the attributes express the positive content of that being of God which the doctrine of infinite perfection carries beyond all limits or capabilities of our thinking. We thus do know something of God, though we cannot know Him to perfection. We apprehend according to our limited measure where we cannot comprehend. The doctrine of the infinite perfection of God is a faith, rather than a demonstrated knowledge, like all faith reaching out toward the unseen

with an assurance which brings full conviction as well as in some measure present possession, Heb. xi. i.

Immutability.

The immutability like the eternity of God is a correlate to His self-sufficiency. He who exists of Himself alone, and possesses in Himself all the infinite fulness of being; cannot be changed; in His very nature, He cannot be greater, and He cannot be made less. There is none beside Him by whom He may be changed, and none by whom He is limited.

The scriptural teaching however is again entirely from the standpoint of religious faith, and not from that of ontology. The immutable God is presented to us as the firm foundation of an unwavering faith. It is when his own strength is failing and his days shortening, that the Psalmist calls to mind the immutable strength of his God, contrasting this with the perishing nature of all created things. "They shall be changed. But Thou art the same and Thy years shall have no end." For the establishment of a more complete faith in all the truth of God as revealed in Jesus Christ, the writer to the Hebrews reminds them that "Jesus Christ is the same to-day, yesterday, and for ever." The same religious and moral presentation we have in Malachi iii. 6, where the sinning people are reminded that their spared life is a proof not of slumbering justice but of unchanging mercy.

"I, Jehovah, change not, therefore ye, O sons of Jacob, are not consumed."

The perfection so presented is not to be construed as denying the activity of God in time and space. The acts of God are finited by His will and are done in time and space or there could be no world like ours. The immutability of God is an immutability of being and perfection and not a sameness of action.

On the other hand, the doctrine of immutability excludes all evolution in God. It is inconsistent with Pantheism. Evolution is of the finite and may take place under the Divine will in the creature but not in the Creator.

The Unity of Divine Perfection.

That God is one was a most distinctive truth of the Old Testament revelation and was made the foundation of that supreme faith and worship which distinguished the Hebrew religion. The multiplication of gods degrades the worship rendered to any one. Hence the first commandment, and Deut. vi. 4: "Hear, O Israel; the Lord our God is one Lord; and thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul and with all thy might." In a later age this fundamental faith expands to the full recognition of the fact that the Divine perfections and attributes can belong to but one only God, and thus He is distinguished not only from all false gods, but from every finite creature. In that culminating age of the Old Testament

which is represented by the second Isaiah, this truth is asserted with the utmost emphasis of repetition. "I am God and there is none else; I am God and there is none like Me." "Is there any beside Me? Yea, there is no Rock; I know not any." "Before Me there was no God formed, neither shall there be after Me," Isa. xliii.-xlv. The united voice of the Old Testament is thus expressed by the Psalmist, Ps. lxxxvi. 10, "Thou art God alone."

This faith of the Old Testament enters most clearly and fully into the New. Our Lord Himself prays as the highest religious privilege of His disciples, "That they should know Thee, the only true God"; whom He had already taught them to regard as the only God," John xvii. 3 and v. 44. So to Paul "God is one," Rom. iii. 30, alike to Jew and Gentile; and this became the permanent and universal badge of the Christian faith, as we may see from 1 Cor. viii. 4-6; 1 Tim. i. 17, ii. 5; Jas. ii. 19; Jude 25.

And what is thus taught by inspired faith, is also the teaching of an enlightened Christian reason. The Divine attributes all unite in a perfect harmony. A perfect knowledge, a perfect truth, a perfect right, a perfect goodness and a perfect love, all meet in one perfect, immutable, and eternal living thought and being. We have studied various aspects of Divine perfection, but each of these in the convictions of our highest reason implies all the others. He who exists in and of Himself

alone, who has life in Himself, can have no limits to the fulness of His being, must fill eternity and immensity, can know no change, can have no fellow, and cannot be divided. The very conception of perfection thus points us by the necessity of thought to one only and eternal God.

CHAPTER IV

THE PERSONALITY OF GOD

THE attributes of God, already considered, lead us gradually up to the Divine Personality. In fact the conception of personality is involved in the complete idea of each of these attributes. Even omnipresence is not mere passive location everywhere, but personal presence, *i.e.* assertion of being, conscious and active existence everywhere. Still more fully is this the case with omnipotence and omniscience — goodness and wisdom. Only in a limited and accommodated sense can these attributes be at all applied other than to a person. The pantheistic conception of being, efficiency, intelligence, or rationality, or even of power working for goodness or righteousness, is not at all an adequate or even proper expression of the Divine attributes as apprehended by religious faith. The religious spirit which rested in such a conception would be an exceedingly feeble religion.

But when we come to the attributes of freedom, truth, holiness, and love, not merely the complete idea, but the very essence of these attributes is inseparable from personality. The essential distinction between a free act and the action of

chemical and physical forces lies in the fact that the first proceeds from a person, the latter takes place among things. Truth also as an active and moral attribute, can belong only to a person, otherwise it becomes a mere quality of thoughts or ideas, or of their expression. It is scarcely necessary to speak of moral character as personal. It can be nothing else; and love can exist only between persons. If, then, our religious faith in its depth of feeling has apprehended the truth of God in these attributes, it has already apprehended a personal God, and it is not too much to say that true religion can be satisfied with nothing else. It is not a mere play of imagination or rhetorical personification that has led all religions, from the lowest to the highest, to conceive of God as a personal being standing in personal relation to His creatures. It is the demand of our religious nature; and unless that nature has been made to deceive us, the true God is a personal God. It thus becomes the task of theology to unfold this idea of Divine personality into distinctly expressed if not defined thought.

What is a person? What are the essential elements of personality?

1. Personality is something which is attached to real being. It cannot be predicated of an idea or thought, or conception of the mind. Essential or substantial existence must underlie personality. But all such things are not persons; therefore—

2. Personality implies self-conscious, intelligent existence. A person knows himself as existing.

His living activity is not mere blind, unconscious motion. He knows himself in all his acts, and knows his acts.

3. But even this does not complete the conception of personality. I may know myself as having closed my eye before a threatened blow without having consciously willed the act. The movement is thus not fully a personal act; it is a mere automatic motion. True personality goes still further, and implies conscious motive toward action—not merely desire or impulse, the consciousness of which does not yet imply full personality, but moral motive and responsibility.

4. The final characteristic of personality is free activity. It is in the exercise of responsibility and of free personal action that true personality in its completeness is asserted and brought into full consciousness. It is this that gives us the sense of true individuality and continuous identity. A mere link in the chain of movements, even though a self-conscious link, cannot be in the full sense a person.

A person is thus an essential being, having in himself the conscious intelligence which directs, the moral motives which originate, and the free will which effects personal activity.

With this conception of personality before us, it is scarcely necessary to ask, Can we ascribe personality to God? We might rather ask, Can we ascribe personality to any other? He alone perfectly fulfils the conditions of this highest state of being. If we possess it in some measure

it is because we are formed in His moral image.

True to this more perfect idea of the nature of personality, religious faith in all ages has not only ascribed to God attributes involving personality, but has directly conceived of God as a personal being. This is the conception of Scripture in the Old Testament as well as the New. In fact, personality is one of the very first elements to appear in all religions, and thus forms an essential part of that conception of Deity which arises in the soul of man as God is revealed in nature. The deeper revelation of personal communion confirms and enlarges this conception, adding to it the highest element of personal love. It is only as the result of philosophical speculation that the idea is obscured, and even after it has been so obscured, it continues to assert itself both in the sense of moral responsibility and in the confidence of religious faith. No speculative conclusions can entirely eradicate from our deeper spiritual nature some feeling of a personal God. The objection usually made to personality in the Deity is that it is inconsistent with the independence and soleness of God. This is usually set forth as the doctrine of the absolute. It is said that the very basis of personality is the conscious contrast of the self with the not self. This may be quite true in man, and yet not necessarily true in God. In fact, such a doctrine makes it impossible to connect the eternal God with finite creation in time. Unless the eternal God, by a free, self-

conscious act, can begin to create, there can be no creation; and either the world and God are one, or have existed side by side from eternity. But the creative act implies, even before creation, the idea of the finite world as distinct from the infinite God, and suggests that in the fulness of His own thought there might lie the materials for the personal consciousness in God Himself from all eternity. The doctrine of the Trinity will lead to a better conception of this. At present we need only say that only a rigid pantheistic philosophy can profess to exclude personality from the idea of God.

The term personality is not used in Scripture although the idea underlies the whole biblical presentation of God and His works. It is clearly the conception of the Old Testament although the doctrine of the Trinity so closely related to its full development appears only in the New. Everywhere and in all possible relations the personal pronoun is used, every form of personal act and personal affection is ascribed to God, and in such a way as to make it impossible to regard this manner of speaking is mere anthropomorphism. But it is especially in the analysis of the attributes themselves that we discover the idea as essentially involved in the religious conception of God. God can only be the God of our deepest heart faith and affections, of our trust, worship, and our love, inasmuch as He is truly a personal God.

CHAPTER V

THE TRINITY

WE have just seen that the doctrine of the personality of God is an essential part of universal religious faith. The doctrine of the Trinity is not thus universal. It is the subject of more developed revelation, and even in the unfolded conception of God given in the Old Testament, it does not appear in any clearly defined form. It is to be found only in the New Testament as a matter of specific revelation to the more perfect religious faith.

The doctrine is based on three historical elements, each of which is involved in the central Christian faith. These are—

1. The Fatherhood of God revealed through Christ.

2. The Deity of Christ.

3. The personality of the Holy Spirit.

We do not wish at this stage to use these words as the technical terminology of scientific theology, but rather as expressing elements which from the very origin of Christianity entered into its living faith and experience. It was not as a speculative doctrine of eternal generation that Christ spoke of the Father, but as a lov-

ing consciousness coming forth from the infinite depths of His own being, and communicating itself as a new and richer spiritual affection to the hearts of men, so that all learned to say "Our Father which art in heaven." Nor was it as a speculative dogma but rather as a worshipping religious faith that they discerned in Him, God manifest in the flesh. And it was not as a supplement to a speculative doctrine, but through the inward communion of the Holy Ghost that we learn to think of Him as the Comforter, the Helper of our weakness, the loving Spirit who leads and teaches and guides us into truth. It is thus not out of a speculative process but out of the primitive religious faith as it existed in the Church from Pentecost onward that the doctrine of the Trinity arises. The church doctrine is but the attempt of human reason to define these elements and to combine them in harmony of thought with the primary doctrine of the oneness of God. The formation of the doctrine in the Nicene Creed belongs to the field of historical theology. In inductive theology we must begin with the contents of original revelation and of the Christian consciousness of to-day. Of these contents the very first place belongs to

The Fatherhood of God.

This is perhaps the crowning element in the revelation made by our Lord Jesus Christ. The idea of God as Father in a national sense

and as a higher term for the Creator does indeed appear in the Old Testament as we have already seen. Jeremiah makes God say "I am a father unto Israel and Ephraim is my first-born." Malachi challenges for God a father's honour, and demands brotherly fidelity towards the brethren of the chosen race. The Psalmist goes a step farther and nearer to the full Christian idea when he presents God in relation to all that fear Him and toward the fatherless children as a God with a father's pity and a father's care.

1. But from the very outset of His ministry our Lord makes us familiar with an enlarged and universal and far more personal conception of this title of God. The Sermon on the Mount pronounces the peacemakers blessed as the "Sons of God." Its calls for the light of a holy life that men may glorify "your Father which is in heaven." It commands us to love our enemies "that we may be sons of our Father which is in heaven," and commands us to be perfect as our "heavenly Father is perfect." The inner chamber prayer is to "our Father which is in secret," and it begins with Our Father which is in heaven. "Your heavenly Father feedeth" the birds of heaven, and knoweth that we have common human needs; and gives His good gifts to them that ask Him. Forgiveness is the forgiveness of the heavenly Father, and He runs to meet the returning prodigal son. In His sight the little children are precious. And before Him we should call no man father on earth for One

is our Father which is in heaven. These are but examples of His common teaching throughout His ministry.

2. To this Father in heaven so constantly held before the thought and faith of His disciples He feels Himself in most intimate and special relation. It is not as an abstract religious principle, but with the deepest affection of His heart that He calls God Father. His own loving faith in the Father is the faith which is to kindle theirs. His life is consecrated not to do His own will but the will of the Father which sent Him; and they are His brothers and sisters who likewise do that will. His relation to God as His father is thus the guiding and ruling principle of His life. But it is no relation of irreverent familiarity. This Father is Lord of heaven and earth who orders all things and to whom His thanks are due. At the great judgment of the final day, the awards prepared for all will come from this Father's hand. And in His own last agony it is to this Father that He turns, saying, "Thy will be done." And last of all He prays, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do," and "Father, into Thy hands I commend My spirit." Nor was this fatherhood apprehended only from the side of these deep human religious feelings. There was to Him another vision of the Fatherhood of God beyond the knowledge of men, but which at times broke forth in such words as these, "And now, O Father, glorify Thou Me with Thine

own self with the glory which I had with Thee before the world was." "O righteous Father, the world knew Thee not, but I know Thee, and these know that Thou didst send Me." "Father, that which Thou hast given Me, I will that, where I am, they also may be with Me; that they may behold My glory which Thou hast given Me; for Thou lovedst Me before the foundation of the world."

Accustomed as the disciples were from the constant teaching and life of Jesus to this conception, and led step by step up to its most mysterious aspects, it is not surprising that their teaching and preaching should continually set forth God as "the Father" and "the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ," and that Paul should give the thought its widest range of meaning when not as a poetic fancy, or far-reaching speculation, but in the spirit of the most exalted devotion He bows His "knees unto the Father from whom all fatherhood in heaven and earth is named." But this doctrine of the Divine Fatherhood alone would not give us the doctrine of the Trinity; but the foundation for that is laid by the revelation of the Son.

Co-ordinately throughout His ministry as He reveals God as the Father He Himself is manifested as the Son of God. At His baptism there is a supernatural attestation of His Sonship, and in His temptation His own consciousness of Sonship is twice made the ground of the temp-

tation. It is clear from the outset that this consciousness of Sonship was not the common human and religious confidence of a child of God, but something far exceeding this. "All things have been delivered unto Me of My Father; and no man knoweth the Son save the Father; neither doth any know the Father save the Son, and he to whom the Son willeth to reveal Him." Hence a little further on "they that were in the boat worshipped Him saying of a Truth thou art the Son of God"; and Peter to confess Him can find no better words than "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." The transfiguration mount again attests His Sonship in the presence of Peter, James and John. Last of all even His enemies charge Him with blasphemy as the "Son of God." This progressive manifestation we have taken from a single gospel, not John but Matthew. Its facts can scarcely be questioned, and they represent elicited testimonies drawn from religious faith by the events. If it is said that this title represents only a human relation not a Divine, we shall see that its use does not so indicate. The title Son of God is indeed in this same gospel applied to men, and by the Lord Himself; Matthew v. 9, 45; but on the ground of moral likeness. But its application to Christ is founded on Divine attributes; holiness, iii. 17; Divine power, iv. 3; Divine knowledge, xi. 27; His teaching and works, xvi. 16. If, indeed, at times the title seems synonymous with Messiah-

ship, it still implies that the Messiah is endowed with the attributes of God.

The Deity of Christ.

This manifestation of the Son to the faith of His followers as well as in our Lord's own consciousness, prepares the way for our study of the question of the Deity of Christ, not as a speculation or a theological theory but as a matter of religious faith in the early Church and as now existing in the hearts of all believers, even virtually in the hearts of many who through speculation have been led into doubt. Pliny tells us that the early Christians worshipped Christ as God; how came they to do so? The answer to this can only be gathered from a careful study of the religious faith of the Apostolic Church as we may gather it from the Acts and the Epistles. To these the Gospel of St John, written at the point when the faith was just reaching its full perfection, gives the greatest completeness. From these we shall learn that from Pentecost onward the religious faith of the Church, based upon the deep impression left by the life, works, and teaching of our Lord, and especially upon the lines of thought presented in the preceding section, apprehended in Christ something far beyond even the most wonderful human character. From the very first they feel rather than see in Him the attributes of Deity. But it is only by degrees that these emotions of religious faith develop into defined and fully formed conceptions.

In the Acts of the Apostles we have the record of the earlier preaching, first of Peter and then of Paul, and of the life first of the churches in Judea and then of the Gentile churches. This will lay the foundation for the examination of the Epistles, first of Peter, James, and Jude, and then of St Paul. Hebrews, and the Book of Revelation follow in order of development, and lastly the Epistle and Gospel of St John.

The sermon of St Peter on Pentecost after declaring the true nature of the phenomena then manifest before his hearers as an outpouring of the ancient prophetic spirit, turns at once to the supernatural life and resurrection of Jesus of Nazareth. These, followed by the gift of the Spirit, are the full demonstration that Jesus is both Lord and Christ, *i.e.* endowed with supreme authority from God, and appointed the anointed head of His chosen people. He thus by direct appeal to a few well-known facts, the latest of which was actually then before their eyes, sets Christ before them as the supreme object of their religious faith. This appeal brought immediate conviction to three thousand souls, to whom Peter at once proceeds to set Jesus forth more definitely as bestowing upon them remission of sins and the gift of the Holy Ghost. In a little time the three thousand were baptized and rejoiced in the experience of this new inward relation to God through faith in Jesus Christ.

In his next discourse the demonstration of the supernatural character of Christ is founded on a

wonderful work wrought in the presence of all his hearers, to which again he adds the resurrection as the central evidence. This wonderful work, healing the lame man in the temple, demonstrates not the glory of Peter and John but of Jesus, God's "Servant," "the Holy and Righteous One," "the Prince of Life," "whom God raised from the dead." And again there is offered to them in His name the forgiveness of sins now, and another still higher spiritual increase of life from God, when He shall come again to restore all things. The next morning, in the testimony of Peter before the Sanhedrim, this faith is repeated. Christ is "made the head of the corner. And in none other is there salvation: for neither is there any other name under heaven, that is given among men, wherein we must be saved." It may be asked where in these teachings is there implied the deity of Christ? In this that He is here already the direct object of the highest religious faith, faith for works of Divine power which a man like Peter absolutely refuses to arrogate to himself; faith for the forgiveness of sins, for the gift of the Holy Ghost, and for the new life of the final resurrection. The One to whom their faith turns for such things as these is already to their minds infinitely exalted above either human authority or human power. Their conception of Christ is tersely expressed in the words of chapter v. 30-32: "The God of our fathers raised up Jesus, whom ye slew, hanging Him on a tree. Him did God

exalt with His right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour for to give repentance unto Israel and remission of sins. And we are witnesses of these things; and so is the Holy Ghost, whom God hath given to them that obey Him."

Such is the very earliest form of this Christian faith. It is a religious faith in Jesus Christ as Lord and Christ, Prince and Saviour, the Servant of God promised of old, granting forgiveness of sins, the gift of God's Spirit, and the life of a future age beyond the resurrection. We need only ask, Could this by the faith of a Hebrew be ascribed to any less than God? "Who can forgive sins but God only?" expresses a fundamental principle of the Jewish theology which Christ Himself never disputed. The other works ascribed by this faith to Christ are no less Divine. We freely admit that the metaphysical definition of the deity of Christ had not yet been made. We only claim that the religious faith here clearly manifest involved it, and was rapidly leading through the teaching of the Holy Spirit to its conscious conception.

We have now arrived at a point in the history where there is a definite step in this development. Stephen's discourse, interrupted in the midst, did not permit any statement of his idea of the Christ; but his dying words are remarkable. With a vision of the Son of Man standing on the right hand of God before his eyes when falling under the murderous stones, he cries, loud and distinct, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit." "Lord, lay not this sin to

their charge." Both are the deepest and most direct turning of the religious heart toward its God.

The new faith was now becoming a recognised and distinct institution in the world. Its method of work was being organised even outwardly, and the duties of its officers defined. Its moral and religious power in the hearts of men was spoken of as the Kingdom of God, of which Christ was King. Its body of followers were known as the Church, and over this the Apostles were exercising authority; persecution now arose, not merely against individual preachers but against the whole Church whose adherents were being sought out. Its missionaries, going forth from Jerusalem, were extending the Gospel throughout Judea to Samaria, and as far as Damascus and Antioch in the North. It is natural that we should now expect more complete definition of the new religious faith. This comes with the conversion and preaching of Saul of Tarsus.

He was Christ's chosen vessel to bear His name before the Gentiles. Educated in one of the three most important centres of Greek learning, and also at the feet of Gamaliel in Jerusalem, he was pre-eminently fitted to carry the faith of the Hebrews to the Gentile world. And now that he had grasped God's new revelation of this faith, and had become conscious of his special commission to the Gentiles, it was perfectly natural that he should present the Divine dignity and glory of Jesus as the object of religious faith, not merely as

the Messiah, nor even as Lord over the Kingdom of God, but as "the Son of God." This was a term which could be understood by the Gentile mind, as the other terms could not. The Messiah and the Kingdom of God were Jewish conceptions, dating back to the prophetic age. The term "Son of God," on the other hand, was a stumbling-block to the Jews, but easily apprehended by the Gentiles as placing Jesus before them as the object of faith and worship, without as yet requiring a metaphysical definition of His nature. At the same time it contained in itself, more fully than the terms "Messiah" or "Lord," the germ of the full idea of Christ which was shortly to become the defined faith of the Church. It was already the term which found its way to the lips of the Roman centurion as he stood beside the Cross. And, notwithstanding the Jewish prejudice against it as blasphemy, the way for it had been abundantly prepared by Christ in His intercourse with the twelve, as we have already seen. While a stumbling-block to the unbelieving Jew, it could not be offensive to the disciples of Christ. From the beginning this was the theme of Paul's preaching. "Straightway in the synagogues he proclaimed Jesus that He is the Son of God."—Acts ix. 20. The force of this new term is quite evident from three different points of view. To the disciples of Christ it was associated with those evidences of Divine power and attribute which accompanied its application to Jesus during His lifetime. It could scarcely mean less to them now than it did then. The

Jews evidently interpreted it as conveying the idea of Divine nature and prerogative, otherwise they could not have called its use blasphemy. To the Gentiles, as used in their language and literature, it could only convey the same idea. Here, then, we have the step from the most exalted conception of the office and work of Christ as Divine, to the conception of His nature as Divine. Still, even here, the conception is not so much metaphysical as religious. He is the Son of God, not to speculative theory but to religious faith.

Our first synopsis of a Gospel sermon from Paul is found in Acts xiii. Like Peter, he, after setting forth Christ in His historical relations, sufferings and death, appeals to the resurrection as the fact which gave Divine attestation to Him as the object of religious faith. This religious faith looks to Him as the Saviour through whom is offered remission of sins. But it does so, not only as Messiah and Lord but as "the Son of God."—Acts xiii. 30-37. This is the one instance of an extended sermon by St Paul given in Acts: but in chap. xx. 21, he has given us a synoptic statement of his entire preaching, which implies that it was always substantially the same, "Repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ;" and a little further on (verse 28), when he speaks of "the Church of God, which He purchased with His own blood," if this be the true reading, the doctrine assumes the form not only of implicit religious faith, but even of conscious definition. At this point such a definition

would not be at all surprising from one of Paul's intellectual training and habits of logical thought. It will also be noticed by one who has followed carefully the language of Paul at this period, that another term is most frequently applied to Him with peculiar emphasis of meaning. This is the term "Lord." It is sometimes "the Lord"; again, "the Lord Jesus," and again, "the Lord Jesus Christ." In his entire use of this term it is the expression of the highest religious faith and worship. The Gospel which he preaches is "the right ways of the Lord," and "the teaching of the Lord," and "the Word of the Lord." The miraculous power of Divine judgment is "the hand of the Lord." The authority by which he preaches is the command of the Lord, set forth in words of Old Testament prophecy. In prayer and fasting he commends the Church to the Lord on whom they had believed; and is himself commended by the brethren to the grace of the Lord. He directs the Philippian jailer to "believe on the Lord Jesus," and he is said to have believed "in God," while of Crispus it is said he "believed in the Lord." But it is quite unnecessary to carry this further. This title is associated in Paul's use with the highest acts of religious faith and worship, such as are rendered to God Himself. In one respect Paul's use passes beyond that of Peter in the earlier chapters; Peter speaks of Jesus as made or constituted "Lord and Christ" (Acts ii. 36), showing that he has before his mind His office in the Kingdom of God. Paul does not use the term thus.

To him it may be either a term of office or of nature. It is a term expressing the deepest religious feelings, and seemingly inclusive both of Divine nature and office. The secret of the life-long use of this term with the deepest reverence by St Paul seems to be opened up to us by his own account of his conversion, when, as he tells us, he "saw the Lord," and in submitting his heart and life to Him used this very word, "Lord, what shall I do?"

This historical review of early religious expressions of faith in the Hebrew and Gentile Churches and of the preaching, both of Peter and of Paul, will prepare the way for the study of their Epistles. With Peter we may group James and Jude as expressing the faith of the Jewish Churches.

In these writings we find much more fully developed conceptions than those to be found in the earlier chapters of the Acts. First of all the fully extended title, "The Lord Jesus Christ" is now used by all. In St James, it is used not only at the beginning in immediate juxtaposition and co-ordination with God Himself, but again in the second chapter it has attached to it the Divine attribute "of glory." In the first Epistle of St Peter it is used but once, but there in the unique expression, "The God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ," reminding us of his own confession in former days, "Thou art the Christ the Son of the living God." In the second Epistle it occurs several times; and in relations which belong to

the Divine. The Kingdom which is so often spoken of as the Kingdom of God is here "the Eternal Kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ." "Grace and knowledge" as well as "glory" belong to "our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ." To St Jude He is our only Master and Lord, Jesus Christ, and his final doxology is presented to "the only God our Saviour through Jesus Christ our Lord." It is surely not too much to say that the faith of these Apostles of the Jewish Church thus expressed in this title a full Divine reverence and worship paid to Jesus Christ. But in addition to this there are many other remarkable expressions of such supreme religious regard. The use of the title Lord now quite corresponds with that of St Paul. Frequently it is used in such connection that we must apply it to Christ as in the expression "the coming of the Lord." Again it is used of acts and attributes which can be applied to God alone. And yet we can find no attempt to distinguish the application to God from that to Jesus Christ. The least that we can infer from this is that in their religious faith and worshipping thoughts, the two were not severed.

One peculiar use by St James leads to another evidence of the religious attitude of his mind toward the Lord Jesus. The sick is to be anointed in the name of the Lord, and "the prayer of faith shall save the sick. The Lord shall raise him up, and if he have committed sins it shall be forgiven him," Jas. v. 15.

Note here the name of the Lord is invoked in prayer, and he gives the answer, and forgives the sin. No words could express more certainly a religious recognition of Christ as God. This same ascription of the function of Deity to Christ appears in St Peter. The prophetic spirit is the Spirit of Christ. He is the "gracious" one whose mercy is tasted by sinners, and for "His sake" we are to be obedient to all law. In our hearts we are to "sanctify Christ as Lord" and for "His mercy" we look unto eternal life.

With this clear evidence of an attitude of the highest religious faith, reverence and worship on the part of these Apostles of the Jewish Church, an attitude such as the Jewish faith allowed toward God alone, we are quite prepared to accept the revised translation of 2 Peter i. 1, "Our God and Saviour Jesus Christ." Certainly such language would be in entire consistency with their habitual attitude toward the Lord Jesus.

We may now turn to the development of this faith in the Churches of the Gentiles through the instrumentality of St Paul. We have already noted that at the very outset of Paul's preaching, as recorded in the Acts, he begins to "proclaim Jesus that He is the Son of God" (Acts ix. 20), and to "prove that this is the Christ." This seems to be a reversal of the order of Peter, as with him Jesus is first the Christ, and as Christ the Son of God, "exalted a Prince and a Saviour to grant repentance to Israel and remission of sins." But with Paul the Sonship is first and

the Messiahship a consequence. An example of this Pauline preaching we have already studied in Acts xiii. 32-39, when the Sonship, the Resurrection, and the remission of sins are the prominent topics.

Turning now to the Epistles of St Paul, we begin with the earliest, those addressed to the Thessalonians about the year 52. Here, exactly as in the Acts, Jesus is "the Lord Jesus Christ," in juxtaposition and co-ordination of relation to the Church with God the Father. Why add the term Father here if he had no conscious idea of God the Son. The two seem to be not only united but also distinguished, but in the same act of religious acknowledgment. A Hebrew of the Hebrews could not place a merely human Messiah in this place of Divine dignity by the side of the Father. The Church is not only "in God the Father and in the Lord Jesus Christ," but their "work of faith, and labour of love, and patience of hope are in our Lord Jesus Christ, before our God and Father," and they turned from idols, "to serve a living and true God and to wait for His Son from heaven," "even Jesus which delivereth us from the wrath to come." So throughout the Epistle Christ is "the Lord," chap. ii. 15, 19; iii. 11, 12, 13; iv. 1; v. 9, 27, 28; and as Lord exercising Divine attributes and authority, avenging sin, iv. 6, coming to judgment, iv. 15, whose word Paul speaks, v. 15, and with whom we shall be forever, v. 17, whose grace is with the Church, v. 28. So in

the second Epistle, He is with the Father, the source of grace and peace, judgment is His, i. 7-9; he is joined with the Father in comforting the Church, 16, 17; commands are given in His name, iii. 6, 12; and the benediction is from "our Lord Jesus Christ," iii. 16-18.

Here, then, is not it is true a dogmatic attitude or a formulated statement, but an attitude of feeling and religious faith, which of itself begets a manner of thinking and speaking very much akin to that of Peter, James and Jude, but perhaps more full, which places our Lord Jesus Christ, not merely in Messianic dignity and office, but as the object with God the Father of religious worship and faith such as is due to God alone.

The next group of Epistles, Corinthians, Galatians, and Romans, were written near together and represent the same period of development, about A.D. 57, 58. Between this and the date of the Epistles to the Thessalonians, Paul had come largely into conflict with the Judaizing party, representing the earliest dogmatic controversy in the Church. In all ages controversy has been a most powerful agency in promoting the conscious definition of religious truth. Prior to the rise of controversy its expression is emotional rather than logical. But when speculation enters the Church and opinions are broached which jar on the religious feeling, then the Church begins to question her own religious heart, and out of its depths to define more clearly that which she believes. It is this which even in the New

Testament itself constitutes Paul and John theologians as well as preachers. One of the issues now called in question was the Divinity of our Lord Jesus Christ. The Judaizing party acknowledged His Messiahship, but denied His deity, and treated Him as mere man. In the second group of Epistles now before us, we find all the forms expressing religious faith in Christ, and uniting Him with God the Father as the object of that faith not only continued but more prominent and numerous than ever before. They occur in these Epistles about one hundred and forty times, and in every variety of application, and with the very strongest collocation of Divine prerogatives: Christ is the Lord from heaven; the Lord of the Judgment day; the Lord by whose will all things are permitted.

But in addition to this we have now appearing more distinct dogmatic statements, in which the religious voice of faith in the Divine Lord passes over into the categorical assertion of a great truth or fact, the deity of Jesus Christ. This occurs in these Epistles three times, Rom. i. 4; ix. 5; and 1 Cor. xv. 47.

These three passages, like all formed statements of doctrine, grow out of the controversy. The tendency of Paul's opponents was to reduce Christ's office, work and dignity, to the level of the Hebrew line of prophets. Granting that he was the Messiah, he was still but an inspired and chosen man. He might perfect but could not supersede the work of Moses and the prophets.

To Paul, on the other hand, Moses and the Prophets were but the forerunners of Christ, and with Him their work ended. Its inmost heart of truth, its spirit, indeed continued, but its outward form, its letter was done away, and to continue it longer would be deadly. Nor was there any need. Christ is all-sufficient. Paul was quite satisfied to count all his Jewish advantages and prerogatives, "loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord." In Christ he found the full satisfaction of his religious faith. And Christ is thus sufficient, not because He is a prophet, or even one of the ancient prophets returned, or even more the Messiah himself, but as the Son of God. Through this Divine Son we, who before were only servants, receive the "adoption of sons." Circumcision was the sign of the old bondage, we have entered into a new dispensation of the liberty of the Sons of God. "With freedom Christ has made us free." Hence it is this higher office, prerogative, and nature of Christ which it is important to assert. His relation to David was a part of the Jewish faith in his Messiahship, all right in itself, and most important when Christianity was beginning its mission among the Jews. But a perfect Christian faith grasps a far higher and more comprehensive relationship. It is upon this broad foundation that Paul places his Apostolic commission in Rom i. 1-7. He is separated unto a gospel not concerning the Messiah only, but concerning God's "Son," "who was born of the seed of

David according to the flesh" (the Messiahship recognised as the human form), "who was declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the Spirit of holiness, by the resurrection of the dead." He gives ample and cordial recognition to the Jewish, human, Messianic side of Christ's work, but he brings to the forefront the wider and divine point of view. Similarly, when in chap. ix., he approaches the difficult problem of the seeming rejection of the ancient people in the formation of the new and world-wide Kingdom of God, he again with the deepest sympathy recognises the relation of the Hebrew people to Christ and Christianity; but He cannot stop there, for He is not only the Messiah of the Jews, but "over all, God blessed forever." In both these passages Paul has not lost one whit of his religious fervour; his faith is still filled with the deepest religious sentiment; but it has assumed more complete intellectual definition. And this intellectual definition, holding up before his distinct consciousness the Deity of his Lord, at once lifts his faith to a wider outlook, and fills his heart with a deeper reverence.

The third passage presents to us another development of the doctrine. 1 Cor. xv. 47. "The first man is of the earth, earthy; the second man is of heaven. As is the earthy, such are they also that are earthy: and as is the heavenly, such are they also that are heavenly. And as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly." It will be noticed that

the Revisers omit "the Lord," although it is found in the Sinaitic Ms. and in corrected A. But whether with or without the title "Lord," the origin of the first Adam is here pointed out as of the earth, human and mortal, and his character corresponds. The second is from heaven, for the preposition denotes origin, and character, "heavenly," follows.

Christ is thus to Paul clearly not a natural man, but a supernatural being. His words are an echo of the language of the Lord Himself, recorded by John, "I came down from heaven." That this point settled the definition of the nature of this supernatural being is easily made clear from St Paul's whole manner of speaking of Him. He cannot be less than Divine. The image to which Paul aspires is the image of God.

The last group of Epistles of Paul belongs to the days of imprisonment. They were written probably from Rome A.D. 61 to 64, under circumstances which called out the Apostle's deepest feelings, and gave him a vision of all the mysteries of religious faith. In the solitude of the dungeon the Spirit opened up to him the infinite mercies and the eternal purposes and the results, surpassing all powers of thought, which God is working out through all the ages, by Jesus Christ our Lord.

Here, then, we may expect to find Paul's highest conception of the nature of the Lord Jesus Christ. Nor are we disappointed. In the very first of these Epistles, that to the Philippians, written about A.D. 61, we meet the following

passage:—"Christ Jesus: who being in the form of God, counted it not a prize to be on an equality with God, but emptied Himself, taking the form of a servant, being made in the likeness of men; and being formed in fashion as a man, He humbled Himself, becoming obedient, even unto death, yea, the death of the Cross. Wherefore also God hath highly exalted Him, and given Him the name which is above every name; that in the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven and things on earth, and things under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father." If we had not been already prepared by tracing the gradual development of Paul's conception of Jesus Christ, we might well be staggered at the fully-expanded dogma which is contained in this passage. Even as it is, we see a great step here beyond the strongest statement yet considered. First of all it clearly predicates the pre-existence of Jesus Christ, and that in the form of God, and with a dignity which was on an equality with God. This dignity He resigns, and the steps of His voluntary humiliation are one by one recounted down to the Cross. Then He is exalted to a new dignity, a dignity which surpasses that of every name in the universe of God; and in this new dignity He is to be honoured, served and worshipped by every creature, to the glory of God the Father. Again, the title Father compels us to think of the Son, and the doctrine seems almost completely developed in the thoughts of

Paul. Note again how this logical unfolding of thought still holds fast to the depths of religious spirit.

Turning to the Epistle to the Ephesians, we meet with a peculiar presentation of the Fatherhood and the Sonship, now so distinctly held in relationship in the mind of Paul. The Father is the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. The pre-eminence of the Father is thus clearly asserted (chap. *i.* 3), and is carried through the chapters following into the whole range of mediatorial work.

But this Father is "the Father from whom every fatherhood in heaven and on earth is named." Paul has thus quite clearly in mind the idea of a heavenly Fatherhood; as he had told us years ago that the second man is from heaven, and that we are to bear the image of this second Man from heaven as we have borne the image of the earthy. A little further back (chap. i. 5), he had told us that this Father of our Lord Jesus Christ had chosen us "in Christ, before the foundation of the world," and "foreordained us unto adoption as Sons, through Jesus Christ, unto Himself," and that He purposed in Him to sum up all things in Christ, the things in the heavens and the things upon the earth," placing Him "at His right hand among the heavenly places, far above all rule, and authority, and power, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come." It may be said that this is only an expansion of the Mes-

sianic glory ; but it is an expansion which runs along the same line of thought which we have found in the Epistle to the Philippians, and there, as here, was carried into a pre-existent eternity as well as into the future, and which there was expressly founded on a pre-existence in the likeness of God.

This remarkable presentation of Christ is still more expansively defined in the closely related Epistle to the Colossians, the third of this group. It begins by setting before us "the *Father*," who hath translated us into the kingdom of "*the Son of His love*" (Col. i. 13), "who is the image of the invisible God, the first-born of all creation, for in Him were all things created in the heavens and upon the earth, things visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers ; all things have been created through Him and unto Him ; and He is before all things, and in Him all things consist" (Col. i. 15-17) ; "And He is the head of the body the church ; who is the beginning, the first-born from the dead ; that in all things He might have the pre-eminence. For it was the good pleasure of the Father that in Him should all the fulness dwell ; and through Him to reconcile all things unto Himself, having made peace through the blood of His cross ; through Him, I say, whether things upon the earth, or things in the heavens." To this certainly belongs the sentence in chap. ii. 9, "In Him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily."

The conception of Jesus Christ expressed in these three Epistles may be then briefly summed up thus :—

1. A definite conception of the pre-existence of the Christ, not as a mere purpose or thought of God, but in real being.

2. The antecedence of this Being to all creation.

3. That through Him all creation took place, as in and by Him all the works of God lead to one supreme end, which is centred in Him and in His cross.

4. That He is in Himself the image of the invisible God, in whom God hath made all fulness to dwell.

5. That thus in dignity, authority, and power He stands supreme over all the universe of God.

It will be seen, again, that all this unique conception springs from, and ministers to, religious faith. It is but the fully enlightened expansion of the religious reverence with which Paul from the beginning thought and spoke of his Lord. These highest flights of thought, seeking to grasp that which is beyond all that we can think, like Isaiah's vision of the throne, but bow his spirit in the deeper reverence of Him unto Whom is glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen.

The remaining three pastoral epistles were written for a practical purpose, and in the midst of great suffering and most distracting circumstances. It was not the time of quiet contem-

plation, but of severe suffering, desertion of friends, preparation for trial before the imperial tribunal, waiting for sentence, expecting death, yet carrying the burden of the churches, and all this in the feebleness of broken strength and old age. We therefore miss the extended paragraphs that reach out into eternity, and cast a glance of triumphant faith over all the works and ways of God. But we do not miss the thoughts themselves, or the familiar forms of expression. "Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners." Here is the idea of pre-existence. "There is one God, one Mediator, also, between God and men, Himself man, Christ Jesus, who gave Himself a ransom for all." Here is, at least, a suggestion of One who is not only man, but more than man, of whom we need to be reminded that He is also man.

The remarkable expression in chap. iii. 16 is scarcely less significant, whether we read ὃς or θεός. "He who was manifested in the flesh," implies a mysterious pre-existence, impenetrable to man as is the existence of God Himself, and places our Lord in the thoughts of the writer entirely above the nature of mere humanity. The same is involved in the solemn invocation of Christ Jesus with God and the elect angels, before whom He is placed in chap. v. 21, and of God and Christ Jesus alone in chap. vi. 13, even if we interpret ver. 15, with its divine titles, to God the Father and not to Christ, as the revisers seem inclined to do. All the expressions show that

in this epistle we are in close touch with the same lofty conception of Christ's nature and prerogatives. In the second epistle (chap. i. 9, 10) there is still more distinct reference to the line of thought unfolded in Ephesians and Colossians, where our Lord is placed above all created beings. And finally, in Titus ii. 10-14 and iii. 4, we have Paul's final expression, "The glory of our Great God and Saviour Jesus Christ," as well as the more simple and direct, but not less expressive, term, God our Saviour. The whole line of development, and mode of thought and expression, which we have traced through the writings of St Paul, seems amply to justify the application of these last terms to the Lord Jesus Christ in their full significance.

We are now prepared to summarise in chronological order the doctrine of Paul on this point of the Deity of Christ. Beginning with Jesus as the Son of God, and so the Messiah, he from the beginning of his ministry sets Him forth as the object of faith, hope, love and worship with the Father. Further on, in opposition to the Judaizing conception of Christ as a mere man, he distinguishes the term Son of David from Son of God, applying the first to Christ in His human, and the second in His divine nature, placing Him "over all God blessed for ever," and contrasting Him with the first Adam, as "from heaven"; and uniting Him with the Father and the Holy Spirit in benediction. He next advances to speak of Him as pre-existent, in the form of

God, on an equality with God, the image of the invisible God, the fulness of God, and the instrument of all creative work, and the One in whom all things consist. Finally, he speaks of Him as God our Saviour, and the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ, and the One who was manifest in the flesh received up into glory.

In this progressive exhibition of his religious feelings and thoughts we see how fully and continuously to the mind of Paul the Father from whom all Fatherhood in heaven and earth is named and the Son through whom all Sonship is bestowed are correlated and familiar ideas, together carried back into a past eternity.

CHAPTER VI

THE TRINITY CONTINUED

WE now turn to the development of Christian faith which followed the death of St Paul. It consists of three parts :—

1. An epistle to the Hebrew Church written by someone of the Pauline school, dealing specially with the Judaizing tendency to exalt and perpetuate the Mosaic institutions, and to lower the idea of Christ's nature and work. It probably dates at the time of the persecutions which immediately preceded the fall of Jerusalem about A.D. 67 to 69.

2. An Apocalypse addressed to the Gentile Churches of Asia Minor by John, the date uncertain, but either during the persecutions under Nero or Galba about A.D. 69, or the persecution under Domitian, A.D. 95.

3. We have the final expression of Apostolic faith in the epistle and Gospel of St John towards the close of the first century. As might be expected from the line of Pauline development which led up to it, as well as from the Judaizing and Jewish persecutions to which the Hebrew Christians had been exposed, the epistle to the Hebrews opens with a remarkably full and ex-

plicit presentation of the Divine glory of the Son, chap. i. 1 to ii. 3. This is followed by an argument, or rather series of arguments extending to chap. x. 18, setting forth the superior dignity of the head of the New Dispensation, and containing repeated allusions and sayings implying Divine honour and attributes. An exhortation completes the epistle, based on the same ground of the nature and exalted dignity of Christ.

In the introduction Christ is God's Son distinguished above all the prophets, heir of all things, instrument of all creation and Providence, the effulgence of the Divine glory, and the very image of His substance; as God's Son above the angels and the object of their worship, the One of whom it is said:

"Thy Throne, O God, is for ever and ever,
And the sceptre of uprightness is the sceptre of Thy Kingdom."

And again:

"Thou Lord in the beginning hast laid the foundations of the earth,
And the heavens are the works of Thy hands;
They shall perish, but Thou continuest;
And they all shall wax old as doth a garment;
And as a mantle shalt Thou roll them up,
As a garment, and they shall be changed;
But Thou art the same, and Thy years shall not fail."

And yet again:

"Sit thou on My right hand,
Till I make thine enemies the footstool of thy feet."

Hence the greatness of this salvation which

began to be spoken by this Divine Lord. Several points are notable here:—

1. This is the language of the second generation of Christians, of those who received the Christian faith from the apostles and first disciples. It thus represents the impression which they had received of the nature and dignity of Christ.

2. It embodies all the highest thoughts we have seen embraced in the earliest Christian faith, but gradually shaped into clear definition in the mind of St Paul in the course of his life, labour and conflict.

3. It expresses these not in the guarded and indirect forms natural to one to whom they are coming as a dawning light, but in the direct phrases used by those to whom they have become familiar as established and acknowledged truth. They are not now so much the expression of deep religious emotion as the foundation of earnest logical argument. They are followed at once by a "therefore." In the argument which begins chap. ii. 25, Christ is set forth as superior to angels, ii. 5-18; not only because of His universal dominion, but because all things exist for Him and through Him; the stooping a little lower for the suffering of death was but a needful and gracious step in the progress of His great work, which extends to all things and through all ages. He next appears as superior to Moses and Joshua. He built the house of God, and as the builder He is God, and He is the Son in His own

house; they are but the servants who were faithful in the house. Thus we have "a great High Priest who hath passed through the heavens, Jesus, the Son of God."

This leads to His superiority to the Aaronic priesthood. Their priesthood is transitory, His eternal; they are appointed in an earthly temple, He in the heavenly; they by a law on earth, He by the oath of God; they as infirm men, He as the Son perfected for evermore; they are the mediators of a transient covenant, He of a better covenant with better promises; their sacrifices were mere types, worthless in themselves and unable to give perfect cleansing to the conscience, He through the Eternal Spirit offered Himself without blemish unto God, and by this one offering hath perfected forever them that are sanctified. Such a presentation of this Divine Person who is thus the very foundation of the Christian faith, is once more the ground of an emphatic "therefore." To reject Him is to "tread under foot the Son of God" and to "do despite unto the Spirit of Grace." The faith in Him is the faith of all the good and of all the ages. This faith we are to follow, for "Jesus Christ is the same to-day, yesterday and for ever." It is not surprising that the epistle should end by ascribing to this Jesus Christ with the Father, the glory for ever and ever.

The book entitled in our English Bibles, the Revelation of St John the Divine, is believed to have been written by the apostle who, with

Peter and James, founded the Hebrew Church at Jerusalem. It might thus be expected to continue the more purely religious expressions which characterize the epistles of Peter, James, and Jude. It was written to the Gentile Churches in Asia Minor during one of the great persecutions, either that in which Peter and Paul suffered or that which closed the first century. It represents therefore a new phase of testimony, and may very well be placed beside the epistle to the Hebrews as, if not synchronous in date, at least arising under somewhat related circumstances. Owing to those circumstances, the writer adopts a purely symbolic mode of expression, and hence no directly dogmatic statement is to be found in the book. We can only collect its view of the person and dignity of Christ by observing the method in which the writer speaks of Him and represents Him as speaking and acting.

The book opens with a benediction and a doxology—two acts of religious worship. The first pronouncing grace and peace to the churches "from Him which is, and which was, and which is to come; and from the seven Spirits which are before His throne; and from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, the first-born of the dead, and the ruler of the kings of the earth,"—thus associating Christ with the eternal God in a pre-eminently divine act. The second, the doxology and act of worship rendered only to God, is paid to Christ alone.

Next follows a vision of Christ, in which, in chap. i. 18, divine attributes and prerogatives are clearly ascribed to Him; He is the first, the last, the living one, and holds the keys of death and of Hades. The Saviour who appears in this vision then sends His messages to the seven churches, and each of these messages implies the exercise of the attributes, the authority or the prerogatives of God. He holds the seven stars in His right hand; judges the churches' works, and ordains their punishment, or will confer their rewards; restrains Satan; keeps his saints from the hour of trial. He thus stands as the beginning of the creation of God, and the one who at last will complete his judgment.

Following this introduction, we have a series of symbolic visions: the seals and trumpets, the phials, the thousand years, the city, which have been variously interpreted, but which all agree to represent the unfolding of Divine providence; the conflict and progress of Christ's kingdom, and the final judgment and consummation in glory. We are concerned only with the place occupied by Christ, and the religious faith of the Church, as indicated by the position assigned Him in this symbolic representation of the present and future history of God's kingdom. The general tenor of the book on this point may be summed-up in a single scriptural expression, "In all things He has the pre-eminence." At the very outset He is the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, the Lamb slain, who alone in heaven, or on the

earth, or under the earth, is "worthy to open the book or to loose the seals thereof." Before Him the highest creatures and the elder saints fall down and worship. And in that worship angels, living creatures and elders, ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands, yea, "every created thing which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and on the sea, and all things that are in them" unite in saying, "Unto Him that sitteth on the throne and unto the Lamb be the blessing, and the honour, and the glory, and the dominion, for ever and ever." And the four living creatures said, "Amen." And the elders fell down and worshipped. So a little further on, the "great multitude, which no man could number, out of every nation, and of all tribes and peoples, and tongues, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, arrayed in white robes and palms in their hands," "cry with a great voice, saying, "Salvation unto our God, which sitteth on the throne, and unto the Lamb." As the programme advances, the great voices of heaven proclaim, "The kingdom of this world is become the kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ, and He shall reign for ever and ever." A little later we hear it again, "Now is come the salvation and the power and the kingdom of our God, and the authority of His Christ." Again, the Lamb stands on Mount Zion, and with Him a hundred and forty and four thousand, "having His name and the name of His Father written on their foreheads." As the final conflict advances,

it is said, "The Lamb shall overcome them, for He is Lord of Lords and King of Kings." And again, "His name is called the Word of God"; and He hath on His garment and on His thigh a name written, King of Kings, and Lord of Lords.

As the incoming of the New Jerusalem approaches, it is said of the saints who have part in the first resurrection, "They shall be priests of God and of Christ." The city itself hath no temple, "for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb, are the temple thereof," and "the glory of God did lighten it, and the lamp thereof is the Lamb." And at last, "The throne of God and of the Lamb is in the midst of the street thereof." Such is the final position of the Lord Jesus, on the throne of the universe, with Jehovah God in the midst of the glorified saints receiving their service for ever. And yet the angel which shows these things, true to the sacred reverence of the Jewish religion, refuses all worship, saying, "Worship God." This, then, is no semi-heathen, semi-polytheistic adoration of a great man, or of an angelic being, but deep religious recognition that Christ was God "manifest in the flesh."

But the final consummation and unity of the faith of the Church appears in the two treatises which are probably the latest of the New Testament canon, St John's Gospel and first Epistle. If the same John was also the author of the Book of Revelation it forms a most harmonious

and fitting accompaniment either as the exhibition of the religious spirit out of which the more dogmatic teaching emanated, or as the religious feeling which such teaching was well fitted to create.

The object of St John in writing the epistle was a religious one, viz., that his readers might with himself enjoy fellowship, *i.e.* communion of life, with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ. This object is to be attained by setting before them "The Word of Life, which was from the beginning, which was with the Father and was manifested unto us." We have already found in the Book of Revelation, used unmistakeably as a name of Christ, the expression "The Word of God." Here for the same purpose is used "The Word of Life." In the gospel we shall find it without adjunct "The Word," where this Word is also declared to be "in the beginning," to be "with God," and to be "made flesh and dwell among us." This Word is the Son of God. In this Son we are to abide as "in the Father." "Whosoever denieth the Son hath not the Father; but he that confesseth the Son hath the Father also." This Son is the only begotten whom God "sent into the world" to be "the propitiation for our sins." To abide in God we must confess that "Jesus Christ is come in the flesh," that "Jesus is the Son of God" and that "Jesus is the Christ." And finally "we know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding, that we know Him

that is true, and we are in Him that is true, even in His Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God and eternal life. Little children, guard yourselves from idols." Nothing could be more direct and practical than this closing statement. In the midst of the heathen world, called upon to lay down their lives or else to sacrifice to idols, or at best continually solicited to idol-worship, nothing was more important to those Christians than to know and hold fast to and abide in the true God. Now he declares the Son of this true God has come and brought to us the knowledge of this true God, or rather the power of understanding to know Him, and we are in Him even in His Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God and eternal life. As we finally turn to the gospel, we note in advance that the writer advises us that he has written these things "that ye may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye may have life in His name." (John xx. 31). The object of the gospel and the epistle is thus one, "he that hath the Son hath the life." For this purpose St John first of all presents us with a thesis or dogmatic statement of his subject. (John i. 1-18). This he follows by a marshalling of proofs or illustrations which he presents in narrative form, inasmuch as they are historic facts with here and there a word of comment. Instead of following this narrative and generally chronological order, beginning with the Baptist and ending with the events following the resur-

rection, we may to avoid repetition adopt the following classification :—

1. Various works of our Lord which evince his deity.

2. Our Lord's own words or discourses.

3. The Testimony of John the Baptist and others.

4. St John's thesis and comments in the course of the narrative which directly state the faith which he is demonstrating to the Church.

The argumentative character of this gospel has given rise to the objection that the narrative has been idealized for a dogmatic purpose. If by this is meant that the writer has drawn his conclusions from his facts and has so presented his facts that his readers may easily see in them the ground of his conclusions, there is no objection to the statement. The facts are doubtless generally interpreted as they are stated or rather are stated as they appeared to the mind of the writer in the light of the interpreting spirit. And we are quite justified in attaching great weight not only to the bald facts but also to the interpretation of those facts by the inspired writer. Even in the record of discourses or in the content of written documents no writer of that period regarded *ipsissima verba* as essential to historical accuracy. They reported the sense generally greatly condensed, and words where they were of such a striking character as to fix themselves in the mind. If on the other hand it is meant that there is either a conscious or unconscious falsifica-

tion of facts by addition, diminution, or distortion, this we cannot for a moment admit. We believe the facts were recalled to the mind of the aged Apostle under the influence of the Holy Spirit, as unfolding to his faith the divine character of his Master. First of all, his own soul has been filled with the fully assured faith that Jesus is the Son of God; and under the stimulus of this inspired faith there rush back into his mind all the works and all the sayings of our Lord bearing on this faith, facts, many of them not embodied in previous records because not yet fully understood, and so not so clearly remembered, and old facts and words that now stand revealed in clearer light and fuller significance, and in this way we have this most precious addition to the picture of Jesus Christ. This is the simple natural psychological explanation of the peculiar character of this latest Gospel, and there is thus nothing in its peculiarity to detract either from its authority or from our faith in its truthfulness. It gives conclusions both of the writer and of other witnesses but it gives also the facts upon which those conclusions are based; and thus it is at once dogmatic and historical.

1. St John places in the forefront of his argument a number of special works of our Lord illustrative of his divine attributes. He begins with creative power in the water made wine, chap. ii. 1-11, and the feeding of the multitude, vi. 1-14. He follows this with notable examples of

healing; the nobleman's son, iv. 46, etc.; the infirm man at Bethesda, v. 2, etc.; the man blind from his birth, ix. 1, etc. Finally he gives us a most notable instance of the raising of the dead in the case of Lazarus of Bethany. It will be noted that all three are in perfect harmony with the record of the synoptics. Some of them are there specifically recorded; all except the making of the water wine are included in classes of works which are repeatedly declared to be habitually wrought by Christ in the course of His ministry. John seems to have chosen a few examples suitable to his purpose, and to have set these forth in detail as the basis of faith in his Divine power and mercy. There is no attempt to invent some stupendous and new species of miracle as a demonstration that Jesus is the Son of God, though this is exactly what an impostor of a later age would have done.

To John's presentation of the mighty works of Christ we may suitably add his extended setting forth of the many infallible proofs of the resurrection spoken of by St Luke. We have already seen that in all the Apostolic preaching the resurrection takes a foremost and unique place in the demonstration to religious faith of the divinity of Christ. It is the special testimony of God to His Son. The first two evangelists each devote to this most important fact a single chapter; St Luke a very lengthy one, besides the first eleven verses of Acts; St John two full chapters. Here, again, he enters into detailed account beyond the

others, and yet in general and substantial harmony with them, though the minute difficulties which have arisen in the modern attempts to unite them in a continuous account show that this is not a studied harmony.

2. Again St John gives in connection with these works extended discourses of our Lord, in which He sets forth, with the same reserve as in the synoptists, His Divine consciousness of His Sonship and of God as His Father. The first expression which John records is one in act rather than in words, the assertion of His authority in the temple. It is "His Father's house," and must not be made a house of merchandise; and when challenged for warrant of this authority He in symbol refers to His resurrection. In the discourses we can only call up a few striking expressions: "He that descended out of heaven, even the Son of Man which is in heaven"; "God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on Him should not perish, but have eternal life. For God sent not the Son into the world to judge the world; but that the world should be saved through Him"; "My Father worketh even until now, and I work"; "The Son can do nothing of Himself but what He seeth the Father doing; for what things soever He doeth, these the Son also doeth in like manner." It is perhaps not necessary to quote the whole of this passage, nor of that which occurs in chap. vi. 46, "Not that any man hath seen the Father save He which is

from God, He hath seen the Father"; nor such as vii. 16, viii. 18, 54. But ix. 35, "Dost thou believe on the Son of God?" is specially emphatic, as also x. 14, 15, and especially verse 30, "I and the Father are one," followed by our Lord's own commentary. But perhaps the fullest expression of our Lord's consciousness is to be found in His last words to His disciples (chaps. xiv., xv., xvi., and the prayer xvii.): "Ye believe in God, believe also in Me"; "He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father"; "I am in the Father and the Father in Me"; "We (I and the Father) will come unto Him, and make our abode with Him"; "The Comforter whom I will send unto you from the Father"; "He shall glorify Me, for He shall take of Mine, and shall declare it unto you"; "I came out from the Father, and am come into the world: again I leave the world and go unto the Father"; "And now, O Father, glorify Thou Me with Thine own self with the glory which I had with Thee before the world was."

Without attempting any metaphysical analysis of these remarkable terms, or attempting to extract from their grammatical meaning a precise dogmatic definition, we cannot ignore first their effect as the foundation of the religious faith of the Apostles to whom they were addressed, and, later, of the more fully developed and consciously defined faith of St John himself. He certainly has recalled them to mind and formulated his own faith upon them in the highest significance which they will bear; and they are evidence

not only of our Lord's consciousness of His own divinity, but of the clearly defined religious faith which St John built upon his Master's words. In this last respect they are most important, as we are here seeking, not presumptuously to interpret the mysterious consciousness of our Divine Lord, but to understand clearly the defined and developed faith of the Apostolic Church and the basis from which it was built.

3. A third step to this end we shall find in the confessions and testimonies of faith evoked by the words and works of Christ, and which have also been recorded by St John.

The first is that of John the Baptist, "After me cometh a man which is become before me, for He was before me"; "And I have seen and have borne witness that this is the Son of God." This was the impression made upon the prophetic mind of John and the testimony which he gave—a testimony too which our Lord Himself recalls in after days.

Next Nathanael of Galilee, a man of the highest religious character and insight, perceiving the supernatural knowledge of Christ exclaims, "Rabbi, Thou art the Son of God, Thou art the King of Israel." John also recalls the confession of Peter in a somewhat different form, and probably on a different occasion from that given in the other evangelists, "We have believed, and know that Thou art the Holy One of God." To this he adds that of the blind man, "Lord, I believe. And he worshipped Him"; and that

of Martha, "Lord, I have believed that Thou art the Christ, the Son of God, even He that cometh into the world"; and, finally, of doubting Thomas, "My Lord and my God." Once more these testimonies are not quoted in the ordinary way of textual proofs, but as evidences adduced by St John in support of his thesis that Jesus is the Son of God, and especially as evidences of the faith which St John is here presenting and supporting.

4. But last of all we shall take this faith from his own words, especially in the prologue of this Gospel, which, after the Hebrew manner, is the thesis which he sets out to establish as well as the expression of his defined faith.

This prologue extends from verse 1 to the end of verse 18 of the first chapter, the reference to John the Baptist in verse 15 being a seeming interjected anticipation. The very strongest presentation of this faith of St John would be given by quoting the passage at full length, but it is so familiar to all Christian readers that this is unnecessary. But note the terms—the Word, God, in the beginning, with God, creating all things, the fountain of life and light, lighting every man that cometh into the world, coming to His world which He had made, but which knew Him not, and to His own people who received Him, not giving to all who received Him power to become Sons of God, becoming flesh and yet manifesting the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth, and as the only

begotten Son (or God) in the bosom of the Father, proclaiming that God to men whom no man hath at any time seen. Such is the fully developed Christian faith of St John—a faith not simply in religious emotion but in clear conscious definition; or, to use his own word, understanding. In thorough harmony with this detailed presentation are the reflections which he makes in the course of his argument, such as chaps. ii. 11; iii. 16-21, 31-36; v. 18; x. 33, and his summing up in chap. xx. 31.

We may now profitably compare this defined and developed faith of St John with that of St Paul. The coincidence is best seen in the Greek words used.

(1) Of our Lord's pre-existence St John uses the formula ἐναρχῇ; Paul, ὑπαρχων.

(2) Of his nature St John uses the term υἱος μονογενης; Paul, υἱος simply.

St John, λογος; Paul, μορφη θεου, εἰκων θεου, followed by the writer to the Hebrews with ἀπαυγασμα της δοξης and χαρακτηρ της ὑποστασεως.

(3) Each ascribes to Him creation and precedence to all created beings and things.

(4) St John calls Him God, simply as a direct predicate; St Paul speaks of Him as God our Saviour, and of His being on an equality with God.

It must be noted that this entire Apostolic development of the Apostolic faith, beginning with an attitude of religious feeling and faith, and ending with a clearly defined manner of religious

thought and speech, is not connected with any attempt at the reconciliation of this faith in Christ as God, with the unity of the Godhead. It was doubtless accompanied by the religious faith and feeling that the Father and the Son are one; but the attempt by definitions and distinctions in thought to exhibit this harmony, belongs to the field of religious philosophy upon which we think the New Testament writers do not enter, but which was wrought out with immense labour and controversy by ecclesiastical philosophers in the second, third and fourth centuries.

The Personality of the Holy Spirit.

We have seen that the pathway to the Christian doctrine of the Trinity was prepared by the world's faith and the faith of the Hebrew people in the personality of God. God is not to pure religious faith an unconscious force in or behind the universe of mind and matter. He is a being of conscious intelligence, affection and will, whose every act proceeds from the conscious unity of His own personality. To this question the religious faith of the whole world, in all ages, has but one answer. Any dissent which has appeared comes not from the faith of the religious spirit, but from the conclusions of a form of speculative philosophy. When the religious faith of the Church apprehended Christ as Divine, there was again no question as to personality. This Divine being had appeared among men in

fashion as a man, with all the elements of human personality.

That which men had gradually first to feel and then definitely to believe, was that this person was truly God. We have seen how through His character, His works, His word, and the revealing Spirit, this faith was established in the minds of the Apostles.

The Holy Spirit of God had been on the other hand a familiar thought in the Hebrew religion. To the Spirit of God was ascribed in the Old Testament all creative and operative efficiency in Nature, all natural capacities and power in man, and pre-eminently the superior light and energy which rested upon the prophets and other old-time men of God.

But in the Old Testament, this spirit clearly identified with God, without question regarded as of God and exercising all the Divine attributes and effecting the Divine works, was not personally distinguished from the one God. We do not find any expression which implies even a feeling sense of His distinct personality, or any thought other than that of the immediate presence and power of the one God. And yet the very use of the term "Spirit of God" in connection with a wide class of Divine works having a specific character of creation and inspiration, laid the foundation of the New Testament doctrine of the Third Person in the Godhead.

The term set forth God, not as governing, controlling, judging, punishing, or otherwise working

from without His creatures, but as working in them. If the Spirit is the power of God, it is the unseen power which works in all things.

Even in the New Testament we can find no metaphysical definition of personality. But that which we express by the word is clearly recognized both in the Old Testament and the New; in the Old Testament as an attribute of God in which man participates; and in the New as an attribute of God the Father, of Christ, of men, and as we now hope to show, of the Holy Spirit.

The revelation of the personal Spirit of God to religious faith in the New Testament is quite analogous to the revelation of the deity of our Lord. It is emphatically a revelation of religious faith, mediated first through Christ Himself, and completed through the Pentecostal gift of the Spirit which abides in the Church. As neither the Greek nor the Hebrew language had a word to express the idea of personality in abstract form, we must not look for this revelation even in its greatest completeness in express assertion. We shall find all the distinctive marks of personality applied to Him, such as intelligence, personal affection, personal acts, personal relations. We shall find the forms of speech which are used of persons applied to Him, and that not by the rhetorical figure of personification, but directly and literally. While thus the evidence even of the full apostolic faith is indirect, yet we shall find it quite clear to those who will look for the reality and not the mere name. It begins in

much greater completeness of conception, but does not reach such perfection of expression as the faith of the deity of Christ.

In tracing the development of this faith in the New Testament, we may pursue the following order :—

1. Observe the language, promises and teaching of our Lord Himself in the Gospels.

2. Follow the historic record of the presence and work of the Spirit in the Acts of the Apostles.

3. Examine the language of the Epistles especially of St Paul and St John.

Throughout it will be most important to distinguish tropical language from that which is evidently to be taken literally, and we shall find this not always an easy task.

In the study of our Lord's words we must remember that we have them as recorded by men to whom the Old Testament conception of the Holy Spirit was familiar, and in whose minds the New Testament conception was not yet fully unfolded. We might, therefore, in the Gospel records themselves almost trace a development of thought and expression on this point, not as in the mind of Christ Himself, but in His various reporters. Certainly John's record presents the idea in its most complete form, and has been always the chief source of the Church's faith on this point. To the perfect human consciousness of our Lord the personal communion of the Holy Spirit must have been most real and complete, for God gave not the Spirit by measure unto him.

Passing over the mention of the Spirit by the evangelists in the course of their narrative, we find direct words of Christ in three passages of Matthew, two of Luke, and one early passage of St John, besides the full presentation from the fourteenth chapter onward, and the record of Luke in Acts i. In those passages we find a peculiar distinction of language which is very marked in the Epistles, but is consistently maintained here also between the use of the words Holy Spirit with and without the article. The first seems always used of the personal Spirit, the second of the power or influence of the Spirit or the effects of His work. This peculiar use of language, whether we ascribe it to our Lord Himself or to the evangelists as they render His thought into Greek, seems to open up to us an important distinction. On the one side we have the Old Testament mode of speaking of the Spirit continued, but now used only when the idea of His work and its results are more prominent. On the other hand, a new conception of the personal spirit makes its appearance, in which the Divine agent Himself is more prominent than His work. That of this personal presence our Lord Himself should be most fully conscious, we should certainly expect, and His language does not disappoint that expectation. Even in Matthew and Luke, in the three passages where the personal form is used, there is no possibility of mistake as to a distinct thought of personal relation. The first is Matt. x. 20: "It is not ye that

speak, but the Spirit of your Father that speaketh in you." The personality is here very distinct, another person speaking through us. The second is Matt. xii. 31, 32, referring to the sin of blasphemy against the Spirit. Here again the relation is a distinctly personal one, and could be reduced to a figurative mode of speech only by violence to common usage of language. The third passage, Luke xii. 10-12, repeats the ideas of the other two, and so associates the Son of Man with the Holy Spirit in the form of speech, that both must alike be regarded as personal. The very same may be said of the baptismal formula Matt. xxviii. 19. We think these passages all justify the assertion that our Lord spoke with the most complete human consciousness of the personal Spirit of God. In John iii. 5-8 both forms are used, and the connection of thought is not perhaps decisive as to the personal or impersonal conception.

But our Lord's most distinct utterances on this subject are recorded by St John xiv. 16, 17, 26; xv. 26; xvi. 7, 13, 14 15; and by St Luke, Acts i. 2, 5, 8. In these passages He most clearly involves and presents the personality of the Holy Spirit, especially in those personal relations which link Him with our individual spiritual life, and which are summarized in the New Testament expression, the communion of the Holy Ghost. He is the Παράκλητος, or Helper, the one called in, a term peculiarly personal, He is the Spirit of Truth seen, known, abiding, sent in the name of

Christ, teaching, reminding, coming from the Father, bearing witness, convincing, guiding, hearing, speaking what He hears, announcing things to come. Here, certainly, is a personal being, or else one continuous personification of the most unusual character. Who, for instance, ever heard of an impersonal influence or power, hearing and speaking the things which he hears, or being called in to help or comfort.

Again in Acts i. 2, 5 the form without the article is used, and Divine influence or power or grace may be fitly taken as the meaning; but in verse 8 the article is resumed, and the power received is clearly distinct from the Holy Spirit at whose coming it is bestowed.

Thus from both the synoptic gospels and St John we find that our Lord while at times speaking after the manner of the Old Testament of Holy Spirit as a Divine influence or power; yet whenever the thought requires it distinctly presents a Divine person in personal activity as the fountain of that power, and this person He calls the Holy Spirit.

In Acts ii. we have the fulfilment of our Lord's promise, and the beginning of the experience by the Church of the indwelling or communion of the Holy Ghost. Passing by the quotation from the Old Testament in which Peter generally followed the seventy, we find here again the distinction of usage already pointed out. That with which the disciples are filled is Holy Spirit, Divine spiritual influence or power. But "the Spirit gives" (a

personal act) to them utterance. So in verse 33, that which our Lord received of the Father was the promise of "the Holy Ghost," the personal Spirit. That which we receive is His personal gift, the gift of the Holy Ghost (verse 38). But while the usage is thus quite consistent, with the exception of the variant reading (iv. 31), the personality is not otherwise so distinctly marked till we come to Acts v. 3, 9. Here the presence of the personal Spirit in the Church is most distinctly recognised. The act of Ananias is a "lie to the Holy Ghost," a directly personal idea which could not be used without extraordinary license of an influence or power. And his wife is charged with agreeing to tempt the Spirit of the Lord, again a mode of speech implying personality.

It can scarcely be doubted that in the mind of Peter there was present at this time the distinctly personal conception of the Holy Ghost. The same personal conception appears again in chap. vii. 51, in the words of Stephen, "Ye do always resist the Holy Ghost," the word expressing personal antagonism. So in Acts viii. 29 the personality of the Spirit clearly is expressed, while in verse 39 an influence or power not necessarily either personal or physical snatches or hastes him away.

In many other passages of these records of the Apostolic Church the personal presence of the Holy Spirit is most clearly recognised in relations and acts which can only be understood as personal. "The Spirit bade me"; "The Holy

Ghost said, Separate me, Barnabas and Saul, for the work whereunto I have called them"; these were "sent forth by the Holy Ghost"; "it seemed good unto the Holy Ghost and unto us"; "The Holy Ghost testifieth"; "The Holy Ghost hath made you bishops," "thus saith the Holy Ghost." These are forms of speech which certainly imply a constantly personal conception of the Holy Spirit.

It therefore appears in both the language of Christ in the gospels and in the historic record of the Acts—

1. That the personal Spirit of God is clearly recognized and distinguished from His own gifts, operations, or power, even when the latter are called by the term Holy Spirit.

2. That this distinction is especially maintained where the Holy Ghost is spoken of as acting, speaking, being sent from God, etc.

3. That this recognition of the personal Spirit appears not only in the consciousness and language of Christ, but also in that of the Apostles immediately from the day of Pentecost.

4. That it applies to the Holy Spirit almost every variety of personal attribute and predicate.

5. That in some of the passages the personal Spirit and His impersonal influence are so clearly presented side by side and yet as distinct that it is not possible to confuse them or regard the one as a mere personification of the other.

Turning now to the Apostolic epistles, it will not be necessary to classify them separately as

there are no such marked lines of development here as we have found in the doctrine of the Son. In fact we have already in the gospels and Acts almost every form of expression to be found in the Epistles.

The personal communion of the Holy Ghost was from the beginning the most prominent and distinctive feature of the Christian experience, and was in itself the witness of forgiveness of sins in the name of Christ. The deity of Christ was a deeper element of the new religious faith which was more slowly apprehended. Moreover while our Lord did not proclaim Himself, but left much to be learned by the teaching of the Spirit, His very promise of the Spirit was made in terms that fully implied His personality, and it would seem that the Apostles were expecting not a mere influence or power, but the coming of another Paraclete, who like their Divine Master, was to be their personal teacher and guide. To Peter thus, as well as to Paul and John, the Spirit was given and revealed Himself within in such directly personal relations, that from the very outset as we have just seen, He was recognized as a Divine personality. In the Epistles we find the same distinction between Holy Spirit as influence or power or results of such power in the souls of men, and the Holy Spirit as an active and personal agent, which we have already observed in the gospels and Acts. The same personal acts of helping, teaching, speaking, commanding, witnessing, comforting, are repeated. A single chap-

ter from St Paul, Rom. viii., will afford abundant illustration. Here the Spirit first gives us a law opposed to that of sin and death; He dwells in us; He leads the sons of God; bears witness with our spirits, helps our infirmities, and makes intercession for us according to His own mind, which is the will of God. So in 1 Cor. ii. 10-14, the Spirit searches and knows the deep things of God, and teaches us to express them in spiritual language. Because of the indwelling of this Spirit we are the temple of God to be kept holy, chap. iii. 16, and our bodies are temples of the Holy Ghost, chap. vi. 19.

One of the most remarkable references to the personal Spirit is 2 Cor. iii. 17, 18, when the Lord, *i.e.* Christ, and the Spirit are identified, probably not in essence, but in function, giving as Meyer says an economic identity (see John xvi. 7). But this very common work in which the one so represents the other that it can be said, the Spirit, and the Lord the Spirit, implies the equal personality of the two who are so united.

The Spirit of Sonship in believers might perhaps be thought to be but Divine influence or grace forming the characters of the sons of God, in other words, the fruits of the Spirit, and so it has sometimes been construed. But in Gal. iv. 6, the Spirit is set forth in directly personal form, "Because ye are sons, God sent forth the Spirit of His Son into our hearts, crying, 'Abba, Father.'" This is the foundation of the doctrine of a direct and personal witness of the Spirit held by the

most deeply spiritual Christians in various ages. From this point of view in fact we may sum up the New Testament presentation of the personality of the Holy Ghost. It is throughout a religious and not a dogmatic presentation, founded on the inward religious life of the Apostolic Church. Like the deity of our Lord it was involved in the very heart of this new religious faith, founded by Christ and ministered by His Spirit. In the fulness of the light and power of this spiritual life, the communion of the Holy Ghost was most distinctly felt to be personal, a personal intercourse with God, and hence expressed by St John in these words, "Our fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ." And wherever in the history of the Church the fulness of this light and power has been obscured or diminished, there the doctrine of the Holy Ghost has either been neglected practically, or has fallen back to the lower conception of the Old Testament.

Summary of the New Testament Elements of the Doctrine of the Trinity.

The religious faith thus founded by Christ, and by the work of the Holy Spirit in the Apostolic age thus embraces the following elements:—

1. Derived from the Old Testament we have the clearest conception of the unity, spirituality, and personality of God, and a remarkably full and spiritual conception of the Divine attributes as displayed in His works of Creation and Providence.

2. This conception was enlarged by a more profound and spiritual conception of the more personal attributes of truth, holiness and love. These were unfolded to faith not as concrete and limited ways of God, but as universal principles, and yet their application to the relation of the individual man to God was made more direct, and more mighty for the production of spiritual life in us than ever before.

3. This enlarged conception was given to men in the character, life, work and teaching of the Lord Jesus Christ, unfolded to the religious consciousness by the indwelling Holy Spirit.

4. As in former times men had by faith discerned in creation, God revealed in His works, and in human history God revealed in His providential judgments, so now their faith apprehended in Jesus the Son of God manifest in the flesh; and in the Spirit of whose light and power they were conscious within themselves they discerned the Spirit of the Eternal God; and to this Son and Holy Spirit their faith ascribed glory and service and worship together with the Father, who, in the Son and by the Holy Spirit was now more perfectly revealed to men than in all the past ages.

It will be seen that these elements are of the very essence of Christianity as a living religious faith and differentiate Christianity from all other religions. Other elements follow which we shall consider hereafter, but these are the foundation, not as mere speculative opinions, but as a living

faith derived from personal saving knowledge of Christ and the personal communion of the Holy Ghost. This faith is declared in the baptismal formula and in the Apostolic benediction.

EXCURSUS.

The Relation of the Nicene Doctrine to the New Testament Faith.

The ecclesiastical development of doctrine does not fall within the scope of the present work, but it may serve to bring our point of view, and the difference between ecclesiastical dogma and religious faith into greater distinctness if we point out briefly the relation of the doctrinal development of the first three centuries to this New Testament faith.

As soon as Christianity with these fully developed and consciously apprehended elements of religious faith came into contact with Greek philosophy reason began to demand an intellectual harmony of these elements which in all ages at first sight seem to contradict each other. If this faith was inconsistent with itself, or irrational, then it could not long survive. Such questions as these were urged by reason, and must be answered; if God be one, how are there three who are honoured and worshipped as God? In what sense are these called God and worshipped as God? If they are one God, in what sense are they one, and in what sense three? These and other related questions could not be avoided for

man is made a rational and enquiring being, and he cannot rest without the reduction of his ideas to a rational harmony of thought. The religious spirit might rest for a time in the intensity and strong assurance of its religious faith, but sooner or later, the attempt to solve these questions must be made. Early in the second century if not even in the first the philosophic mind of the Church began to work on this problem. The attempt was first made with the deity of the Son for here the pressure of the question was most obvious and most strongly felt. This made the problem more simple.

The speculative principles brought to bear on the question were first those of the Oriental theosophies. These resulted in such a contradiction and confusion of the essential elements of the Christian faith that they were at once rejected, and Gnosticism was never allowed a place in the Church. The instinct of religious faith was here true to its fundamental principles.

The Greek philosophy, especially that of Plato, was more successful, and would seem to have been in the Providence of God specially prepared to assist in this intellectual development of Christian faith.

By the help of its methods three solutions were possible :—

1. To reduce the distinction of the three as largely as possible, making the three modal manifestations of one being.

2. To so magnify the distinction as to eliminate

the problem by making the Son something less than God.

For nearly two hundred years speculation swung backwards and forwards between these two extremes.

3. Finally the problem was so solved as to harmonize the unity and the distinction, so that they may be conceived as eternally co-existent, by defining the sphere, or content, or idea of each.

For this purpose three ideas were defined :—

1. The conception of one immutable, indivisible, eternal Divine essence, to which all the Divine attributes belong, and in which they inhere was expressed in the Greek word οὐσια ; and the adjective ὁμοουσιος expressed the participation of the three persons in this indivisible essence.

2. The idea of personality as the unity of conscious active existence with identity and continuity of existence, and to which all acts belong, was expressed by the Greek word προσωπον, and later by ὑποστασις, and by the Latin *persona*. There are three persons in the one essence.

3. The idea of interrelation was expressed by the terms Father, Son, Spirit, begotten, proceeding, and by the preposition ἐκ and the genitive case.

The distinction was thus defined to be of persons; the unity, first of essence, and secondly of relation. In this relation there is a subordination which makes the unity of the essence possible and complete. The Father is first, the fountain of Deity, possess-

ing the Divine essence in and of Himself alone. The Son is second, receiving the fulness of the Divine essence from the Father from all eternity; and the Spirit is third, sent forth and proceeding in the same fulness of the Divine essence and attributes from the Father and the Son.

It has been objected to this formula that it is a Greek or Platonic philosophy rather than a Christian faith. We must admit at once that the intellectual necessity for such a statement was stimulated by the spirit of the Greek philosophy, although arising out of the constitution of the human mind, and that the form was fashioned from the method of the Greeks. But granting this, we may ask three questions:—

1. Are the elements of the New Testament faith fully and clearly retained and expressed under the new Greek form?

2. Has any new matter been added to the New Testament ideas in this new presentation? If so, is it in harmony with the old?

3. Is this old Greek form still suitable to our age and mode of thinking? or could a better form retaining the full New Testament content and meeting the requirements of modern philosophy be now constructed?

In answer to the first question, we think the religious feeling of the Church in all the ages has recognized in the Nicene Creed a very full expression of the elements of the Christian faith. In the original discussions of the Council it does not appear that anyone objected to the proposed

creed as understating the faith. Objection takes the opposite direction wherever it has been taken.

In answer to the second question, we have already seen that the unity of the Deity and the possession of the attributes by each of the three, their distinct personality and their distinctive relations, are either expressed or implied in the New Testament faith. The one thing new is the distinction which separates essence with its attributes on the one hand from personality with its acts on the other. This distinction between essence and personality the Hebrew mind probably did not make. But neither did the Greek mind make it under either the Platonic or Aristotelian, or even the Neoplatonic philosophy. We think that Illingworth has quite clearly shown that the distinction of personality as a separate conception is the product of the Greek mind, it is true, but of the Greek mind under the influence of the Christian consciousness. The Greek philosophy doubtless prepared the way at least by teaching men to seek for such subtle distinctions, but Christianity alone developed it. The whole content of the Creed thus stands before us as either New Testament faith or Christian philosophy.

The only question that remains is, Could the philosophy of our day give us the full content of the New Testament faith in a more satisfactory form? Perhaps the true reply to this from history is the simple statement of the fact that every modern attempt at reconstruction either omits or distorts some New Testament elements. Until

our modern philosophy builds upon the solid foundations laid by the best of the Greeks a more perfect and enduring edifice than has yet been attempted, we can scarcely expect new help from philosophy. And since for the construction of a creed the highest perfection of spiritual life is needed, as well as the help of philosophical definition, we must equal the faith of the martyrs before we can compete with the old creed. For the present therefore we must rest satisfied with the Nicene Creed.

DIVISION II.—THE WORLD AS RELATED TO GOD

CHAPTER I

CREATION

THE idea of Creation is already implied in our religious conception of God. By religious faith we discern God through His works. This, as we have seen, is not the mere rational discernment of the cause through the effect. It is rather something parallel to the intuitive action of reason, a discernment not of a thing, a force, but of a Person before whom we bow with reverence and fear. Where reason sees behind the universe a cause adequate to the effect, faith sees the personal Object of worship. The conception of creation thus springs from religious faith, and is a far wider conception than that of cause as furnished by reason. It satisfies reason as it assigns an adequate cause for the universe. No one can doubt that a God such as Christian faith believes in is adequate to the production of a universe such as we see about us. But if God were simply the cause of the universe, and the

universe the effect of God, they would be exactly equal, the one the measure of the other, and the one completely passing into the other. A cause is exhausted in its effect, its entire being, in so far as it is cause, passing into and continuing to be in the effect.

But this is not the religious conception of God. As we have seen, God is infinite, the universe is finite; God is eternal, the universe is temporal. How can the infinite and the eternal be the cause of the finite and of that which begins to be in time? Only by that act which we call creation; and creation, like all religious conceptions of God and His acts, implies personality. A personal God alone can create, *i.e.* so act out of the eternal fulness of His being, and so exercise His infinite power as to cause an absolute beginning of a finite being in time.

The conception of creation we find as a part of all historic religions, and the form of the idea and its perfection vary with the character of the religion itself. In the earlier stages of religion it is found in a very anthropomorphic form; where religious faith is mingled with philosophical speculation, it passes into a philosophy, which at times includes both mind and matter; only in the purest religious faith do we find the idea in its highest perfection.

We thus naturally turn to the Scriptures, first of the Old Testament and then of the New, to learn their conception of Creation. This we shall not find presented at all under the form of a

speculation, but in two distinct forms, each of which is distinctly religious—

1. In general expressions, statements and allusions, which set forth God as the Creator, the universe as the creature, and the relation of this creature to God's will, word and attributes.

2. In specific creation documents found in the Book of Genesis, and quoted or referred to in a few subsequent passages.

The first of these forms of presentation occurs most frequently, though not exclusively in four books of the Old Testament—Isaiah, Job, Proverbs, and the Psalms. Between these four books there is a very intimate relation, especially in their method of dealing with this subject, owing probably to the period in the religious life of the Hebrew people to which they belong. Isaiah's ideas of the creative work of God are expressed in contrast with the low conceptions of deity which marked the Babylonian idolatry. They include the expanse of heaven, the vast stretch of the earth, and man with his mysterious spiritual nature, as the characteristic works of God from which we may learn His glory and the inconceivable extent of His power and His wisdom. He makes no attempt at a metaphysical conception or definition of creation; but looking out on all the host of heaven, he thinks of each as within the perfect knowledge of God, and coming forth in the plenitude of its being directly by His power. Hence springs his faith that to the power of the Everlasting God there is no

weariness, and of His understanding there is no searching. All power is derived from Him, and they that wait on Him ever "renew their strength." Very like Isaiah in their general representation are Psalms viii. and xix. They dwell in detail upon the works of God especially, the glories of the heavens, and from these read in broad outline the power, the wisdom and the greatness of their Creator.

Psalm xxxiii. enters much more into detail, though not from the outward side of the works, for these he simply mentions as the hosts of heaven, the deeps of the sea, and the sons of men. But all are made by the Word of God. "He spake and it was done, He commanded and it stood fast." And the same word orders all things by abiding laws which are stronger than all the plans of mortal men; for "the counsel of the Lord standeth fast forever, and the thoughts of His heart to all generations." Moreover, the Psalmist sees in creation another aspect of the character of God; "All His work is done in faithfulness. He loveth righteousness and judgment: the earth is full of the loving kindness of the Lord." The work of creation is thus the outcome and act of the highest moral attributes, a personal act of God which with perfect control and power calls into existence and establishes all that is including the mysterious hearts of men which He fashioneth alike.

Very similar to these contemplative psalms are the passages in Job and the Proverbs. Some-

times, as in Job ix. 8-11, xxvi. 5, etc., we have a dwelling on the works in their wonderful glory, and then the worshipful recognition of the unseen Creator. "Lo these are parts of His ways, and how small a whisper do we hear of Him, but the thunder of His power who can understand." Again as in Job xxviii. 23, etc., and Prov. viii. 22, etc., we have that expanded view of the work of creation which delights to follow the wisdom of God in the ordering of the wonderful laws of nature.

These are examples of biblical methods of looking at the work of Creation, for the establishment of faith as against degenerate views of God, and for its enrichment by a more perfect contemplative understanding of His work. From these we easily turn to the hortative use in the Book of Psalms. The faith of an oppressed and desponding people is revived by the thought of the Creator God. Some of these are marked by their poetic beauty, as Ps. lxxiv. 16-17; some by rare insight into the difference between the unchanging Creator, and the finite creature whose being given from God is called back again by Him or changed at His pleasure, Ps. cii. 25; while others, as Psalms xcv. to c., set forth the Creator God as the object of universal worship to all the lands. Perhaps none of these passages surpasses Psalm cxxxix., combining as it does the strongest religious feelings with the widest and most profound contemplative view of the creative work of God.

In all these passages we have no attempt at what might be called the natural history of Creation. Creation is viewed generally as it appears to the ordinary observer. Only in a very few passages is there any reference to detailed facts of natural law, or reference to the minuter and more mysterious works of God. It is the magnitude, the variety, the beauty of His work as a whole which awakens this religious faith which apprehends the Creator. Metaphysical speculation as to the manner of His working or scientific speculation as to its order and succession and instrumentality are quite excluded, or rather do not enter into this purely religious point of view. It does, however, present several most important elements of religious doctrine as to the Creator and His work.

1. It excludes all materialistic conceptions of God and His working. He is the unseen God. The attributes ascribed to Him are purely spiritual. He is thus a personal God.

2. It everywhere presents creation as the result of a personal act of will. It is not a development, but a moral act, an act of goodness, wisdom and power springing from God's good pleasure.

3. It derives the whole being of the creature in all that it possesses of the gift and attributes of life from this Divine act; and so makes the creature entirely depend on the Creator.

4. It recognizes the finiteness of the creature both in time and space, as the result of the

creative act. Both earth and heaven have their ends, and, however vast beyond our knowledge, they are weighed in His balance, or measured in the hollow of His hand. The most perfect of these Old Testament conceptions are contained in the New; and in connection with the revelation of our Lord Jesus Christ, there appears in the New Testament an entirely distinct view of Creation set forth, especially in the writings of St Paul, St John, and the Epistle to the Hebrews. This must be the subject of a later consideration.

The Creation Documents.

We now turn to a most remarkable and difficult portion of the Old Testament Scriptures, the first two documents of the eleven which make up the Book of Genesis or Origins. These sections are clearly the intentional work of the writer or editor of the book, and are distinguished from each other after the Hebrew literary fashion. No intimation is given as to the source from which they have been derived, and here the mechanical theory of inspiration has been applied in its extreme form. To this has been opposed the view that these belonged to the class of myths, or poetical fictions, common to ancient peoples. The advance of three modern sciences has thrown upon these ancient documents an entirely new light, and, we think, given them a new relation to our modern theology, and especially to a theology which seeks to build upon the truths revealed to religious faith as distinguished

from the sciences and philosophy. First of all, Biblical criticism finds in these documents, as in the entire book, a composite character, showing that they have been subject to the laws of literary development. This conclusion, which, however we may differ as to details, is in its main point founded on indisputable internal evidence, renders the mechanical *ab extra* theory of their origin untenable. It does not necessarily detract from their value as a part of Scripture. It only calls for a more intelligent interpretation.

Again, modern archæology has found that congeners of these documents exist among other ancient peoples and religious traditions, especially in South-Western Asia. Some of these agree in identical details, although in religious spirit they may be quite diverse. This discovery interferes almost as seriously as the previous one with the traditional view of the character and interpretation of those documents. Again our modern geology finds itself sometimes at variance and sometimes in remarkable harmony with the cosmogony founded on these documents, and has been invoked both for and against the traditional view of their character and origin. It is, we think, the only honest conclusion that the teaching of modern science is not consistent with the traditional view. This view has, however, extended so largely into our modern ecclesiastical dogma and theologies, that a re-interpretation becomes the very foundation of a theology, in which the harmony of truth will be established between theology and science

upon a solid and permanent foundation. We must, therefore, seek a careful historic interpretation of each of these documents.

The First Document (Gen. i. 1 ; ii. 3).

This document is distinguished by its peculiar artistic form, indicating the most elaborate care in its construction. It consists of seven sections, each introduced by a vav conversive, the Hebrew particle of historical and also of logical connection or continuity. This connective is in each case followed by the phrase "God said," except in the seventh, where it is replaced by "the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them." Each of these sections, except the last, is closed by a refrain, "There came an evening, there came a morning one day," etc. The last is also called the seventh day, though without the evening close. The days are thus natural days of twenty-four hours, but are clearly a part of the literary form which encloses each of the seven successive acts and separates it from the following. This is the usual office of a refrain in Hebrew literature. It is a break, a thing thrown in, not a part of the logical connection of thought, though it may have a general fitness to it. In this case, it marks off the artistic subdivisions of the creative work under the figure of days.

Looking over the sub-divisions of the creative work, we first of all note that they are not perfectly uniform. The first and second days are

single works, indicated by the single use of the formula, "And God said." The third is double. So the fourth and fifth are single, the sixth is triple—*i.e.* the formula is used three times. Again, we find that these six fall into two sections, the second of which traverses again the ground of the first. The first day we have light; the fourth, light-bearers; the second, the atmosphere, or firmament, and the waters; the fifth, the life of these elements; the third day, the land; the sixth, the life of the land. To these six fully completed divisions, divided into two larger groups, the seventh day forms the literary conclusion, and the first two verses of chap. i. the thesis, or introduction. The whole is constructed upon the principles of Hebrew parallelism, and is framed, one might almost say, artificially. It only lacks the free-play of the imagination, or the emotions, to make it a poem; but for neither of these is it conspicuous; it has rather almost the exactness and directness of a scientific or legal statement.

Its artistic form, however, gives a most important clue to its interpretation. It bears the marks of human thought carefully elaborated for a purpose. The human origin of this thought, and the purpose of this elaboration, must therefore be sought for its proper understanding.

The ideas entering into the document are—

1. Religious. God, creation, the living Spirit of God, His command, His delight in the good, His supremacy in ordering all things, are all

clearly developed and leading ideas. These ideas imply high advancement of religious conceptions and of language for their expression.

2. Ideas of nature. The universe is viewed after the Hebrew manner of the heavens and the earth; chaos is described as a deep without order and without inhabitant; and the creative work proceeds along this logical line, giving it first order, in the first four days, and then inhabitants. Further, the four primitive elements of the earliest science or philosophy are recognized, light (fire), air, water and earth; seemingly in the order either of their importance and efficiency in nature as the basis of all its movements and life, or of their approximation to the purely spiritual and Divine. Our modern science may be perhaps disposed to look with supercilious contempt on these old-world ideas of nature; but while they were far from a perfect science in the modern sense of the term, they embodied the most universal and important facts and processes of nature; and embodied the observations of a race that was yet young, and to whom the foremost and universal things of nature were more obvious than to our microscopic and artificial life. A primitive scientific order may also be observed in the classification of vegetation, as grass, herbs and trees; of living things, as fish, fowl, creeping things, cattle, wild beasts, and men. And a religious and natural ordering of seasons and observation of celestial phenomena is obvious in verse 14, following which we have a primitive astronomy.

The ideas of this document as thus enumerated are clearly not the deeply emotional conceptions of a new revelation of marvellous facts to religious faith by a purely supernatural process, but they are the clearly defined conceptions of a somewhat matured religious faith on the one hand, and on the other of an observation of nature which was at least laying the foundations of scientific knowledge. This scientific knowledge was as yet confined to the great outlines and to the more obvious and external facts of nature; but as these are themselves the result of the most universal and interior forces, even their most superficial observation reveals the great essentials of natural order and relation, and proves true to the great outlines of the most advanced science. Such general truth cannot be ignored in this document, especially in placing light and heat (אור) in the first place as determining the ordering of the air, the waters and the earth; again in describing the air as separating and determining the movements of the waters, the waters as bounding as well as fructifying the land, and the dry land as the foundation of vegetation. All these are universal facts of nature, whether expressed with the refined definition of modern science or the more primitive forms of the early ages. So is the order which puts the heavenly bodies at the origin of the seasons, and the seasons before the appearance of animal life, as governing their breeding, their food, their great movements, and in fact their whole life. So still further is the order which

begins life with the waters, thence rising to the air and the dry land, and finally to man.

The document thus clearly embodies that most ancient and obvious generalization of nature, which appears in Greek philosophy as well as elsewhere, as embracing four elements—fire, air, water and earth, as well as other earliest classifications and conceptions of nature. These certainly are not identical with modern science. But they are none the less true to great obvious facts of nature, and as such express truth so fundamental that all true science in all ages will recognize it and be in general outline in harmony with it. Perhaps one might go further, and say that the impulse by which the men of the young world grasped the broad outlines of nature was itself of Divine origin and near akin to the highest religious inspiration. Such impression is strengthened by the indications of unexpected depth and clearness of insight into nature which we meet with in this document, such as the recognition of second causes in the use of the hiphil and in the address of the creative commands to the elements, the recognition of creation as the foundation of permanent law in the repeated phrase "it was so," and of the fixity of species in the phrase "after its kind," in reference to both animal and vegetable life. Again, there is the entire absence of any theory or conception as to the interior method of creative work, thus avoiding the great source of both ancient and modern error. This applies as well to the description of chaos which is made up

of four items, unordered, uninhabited, dark, but moved by the Spirit of God. We may safely compare this in its scientific simplicity and assured truth with either the firemist of Tyndall with its promise and potency of all that is to be, or with the undifferentiated matter of Herbert Spencer.

In turning from this human and scientific side of this document to consider its purport as an expression of religious faith, and hence as a part of the Word of God, we may first compare it with two later portions of the Scriptures, both of which imply a knowledge of the document before us, and hence may be studied as commentaries on it.

1. Exodus xxii.: "For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day, wherefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day and hallowed it." The writer here evidently follows the writer of Gen. ii. 1-3 in making the Divine example of the progressive work in creation followed by rest, a sanction of the Sabbath law for man. This leads us to the consideration of the significance of the form of the original document presenting creation as a work of six days. This form is not based on the natural subdivisions of the creative work, for the writer himself makes eight, if not nine, creative acts, each introduced by the formula "And God said." The alternative seems to be that the form is adapted to the Sabbath week, an institution already in existence and recognized as of Divine authority. The writer

does not assert that the Sabbath was instituted immediately on the creation of man, though that may have been true. He simply connects the institution of the weekly holy rest, as existent in his time, with the creative work of God as its sanction by God's example of creative work and rest; and to make this sanction more obvious, he presents God's work, like man's week, in six days. This same presentation and sanction is adopted in the Mosaic decalogue as given in Exodus, though a different form of sanction is adopted in Deuteronomy.

2. Our second parallel passage and commentary is to be found in Psalm civ. This psalm clearly evinces not only a knowlege of Gen. i., but also, in its continuation through the psalms following, of the entire history from Genesis to Joshua. This series of psalms dates at the close of the captivity or later.

Opening with devout adoration of the greatness, honour and majesty of God, the psalm proceeds to rehearse in the order of Genesis the great steps of the creative work:—

1. Verse 2*a*.

"Who coverest thyself with light as with a garment."

2. Verses 2*b*-4.

"Who stretchest out the heavens like a curtain;
Who layeth the beams of his chambers in the waters;
Who maketh the clouds his chariot;
Who walketh upon the wings of the wind;
Who maketh winds his messengers;
His ministers a flaming fire."

3. Verses 5-18.

"Who laid the foundations of the earth,

That it should not be moved for ever:
Thou coverest it with the deep as with a vesture;
The waters stood above the mountains;
At Thy rebuke they fled;
At the voice of Thy thunder they hasted away;
They went up by the mountains, they went down by the valleys
Unto the place which Thou hast founded for them.
Thou hast set a bound that they may not pass over;
That they turn not again to cover the earth.
He sendeth forth springs into the valleys;
They run among the mountains;
They give drink to every beast of the field;
The wild asses quench their thirst.
By them the fowl of the heaven have their habitation,
They sing among the branches.
He watereth the earth from His chambers;
The earth is satisfied with the fruit of Thy works.
He causeth the grass to grow for the cattle,
And herb for the service of man;
That He may bring forth food out of the earth:
And wine that maketh glad the heart of man,
And oil to make his face to shine,
And bread that strengtheneth man's heart.
The trees of the Lord are satisfied;
The cedars of Lebanon, which He hath planted
Where the birds make their nests:
As for the stork, the fir trees are her house.
The high mountains are for the wild goats;
The rocks are a refuge for the conies."

4. Verses 19-23.

"He appointed the moon for seasons:
The sun knoweth his going down.
Thou makest darkness and it is night;
Wherein all the beasts of the forest do creep forth.
The young lions roar after their prey,
And seek their meat from God.
The sun ariseth, they get them away,
And lay them down in their dens.

Man goeth forth unto his work
And to his labour until the evening.
O Lord, how manifold are Thy works!
In wisdom hast Thou made them all."

5 and 6. Verses 24*b*-30.

"The earth is full of Thy creatures:
Yonder is the sea, great and wide,
Wherein are things creeping innumerable,
Both small and great beasts.
There go the ships;
There is leviathan, whom Thou hast formed to take his pastime therein.
These all wait upon Thee,
That Thou mayst give them their meat in due season.
That Thou givest them they gather;
Thou openest Thine hand, they are satisfied with good.
Thou hidest Thy face, they are troubled;
Thou takest away their breath, they die,
And return to their dust.
Thou sendeth forth Thy Spirit, they are created;
And Thou renewest the face of the ground."

We cannot read this extended description of the work of creation without feeling that the writer is in touch with Gen. i. He follows its order as well as its fundamental religious conception. Each passage speaks the thoughts of a writer in intimate communion with God and with nature, or rather with God in nature. The first, out of the book of nature, reads the original book of God; the later out of the same book reads, not only His original work in the same general order, but also His manifold purposes of loving-kindness, and His continued working in nature ending with the earthquakes and volcanoes which to His mind represent creative power and

work to-day. But the Psalmist, while preserving the same general order and religious spirit and conceptions, takes his own poetic licence in presentation. He is not concerned with a particular sanction of a religious ordinance, and hence he does not mark out the days. He does not present creation as the coming forth of the world in obedience to a series of Divine commands or spoken words, but rather as the vesture, the habitation, and the retinue of God which He hath made for Himself. The light is His garment; the heavens are the curtain of the tent in which He dwells; the clouds are His chariot carried on the wings of the wind; and stormy tempest and flashing lightning are His messengers. In the human form of thought in Genesis we have the orderly statement of a primitive science, in that of the psalm the first play of poetic imagery and pictorial amplification of the theme which he borrows from the older writer. In all cases he freely weaves into his composition new facts gathered from nature, either by his own observation or that of contemporary students of natural phenomena, filling the whole with his own inspired consciousness of the presence, power, wisdom, goodness, and glory of God. All this confirms our interpretation of Gen. i. as an inspired presentation of the observation and generalization of nature which were common in the age in which it was first written, and which were common to the Hebrews with other neighbouring people, and which each clothed in

its own religious garb. And from all this we may learn the important fact that inspired men freely accepted the scientific as well as the historical knowledge of their time, true as it was from their point of view, being a presentation of facts according to the then existing development of the human understanding. It would indeed have been both useless and unwise had the inspiring Spirit thrown the minds and knowledge of all the ages into confusion by anticipating the natural development of human powers. Under such an order, Genesis would have been written, not in harmony with the science of the nineteenth century, but with that of centuries, perhaps millenniums, beyond our time. We can indeed look back and understand the science of all past time, and see that it expresses truth as seen in the light of that age and valuable for all the ages; and such truth we can easily translate into terms of our own thought, even as we translate Hebrew into English. But the science of the year 3000 may be utterly beyond our ken notwithstanding all our good opinion of ourselves and our advanced age. But even in the age of Genesis, both inspiration and science recognized the following important principles which are true for all the ages:—

1. They looked at facts in nature.

2. These facts led them to the idea of order and progress in God's works.

3. They also led to the idea of second causes

in God's works, especially in the operation of the great elements of nature.

4. They led to the conception of Divine law in nature.

5. They united the existing science with religious faith as being both alike, founded in the observation of the works of God. Thus the earliest science and the earliest religion were scarcely separated.

But the mistake of attempting to discredit religion because of its alliance with the best knowledge of the past ages, and the attempt to fetter science for ever to the forms in which it first served as the handmaid of religion, are both alike opposed to the spirit of religion and of science, and to the holy will of the God of truth.

Summary of the Religious Teaching of the First Creation Document.

Having thus studied the document from its human, scientific, and literary side, we may turn to that which constitutes its essential significance as a part of the Word of God—namely, its moral and religious content.

1. It builds upon a clearly defined theistic basis—viz., an absolute beginning of the universe, as well as of each of its great stages or steps of formation. This is its philosophical foundation, not as a formulated philosophy, but as an accepted and implied truth. Before this beginning, its religious faith finds a personal God, the Creator of all things.

2. It never for a moment separates the universe, even in its state of chaos from the presence, power, and creative energy of the Spirit of God.

3. It makes each step in the work of creation the result of the expressed thought and will of God, denoted by the phrase, "God said," His word.

4. It connects each step with the moral nature of God, His good-will or, in language of the creation psalm, the loving-kindness of the Lord. All this is expressed in anthropomorphic terms, such as will convey their true meaning to a child, and yet commend themselves to the reason of a devout philosopher; we cannot to-day improve on them.

5. It views man from the spiritual side of his nature, apprehending thus his true relation to God as created in the Divine image and likeness.

6. It makes the peculiar form in which it presents the work of creation the means of giving religious—*i.e.* Divine sanction to the three fundamental human relations and duties.

(*a*) The law of labour, underlying all the industrial and material side of life.

(*b*) The law of the family and marriage, underlying all social and political organization and progress.

(*c*) The law of the Sabbath rest, underlying all religious observance, and all moral and spiritual development both of the race and of the individual.

The forms by which these institutions are attached to the account are each part of the

literary structure, including the conception of God's doing His work in six days, His addressing to the newly-created man His commands as to labour and the propagation of the race, and the Sabbath rest of God Himself.

But this literary form is not a mere fiction. It has its foundation in the deepest inner truth, and it expresses that truth in a form which conveys the kernel of the true idea to the mind of a child, and which develops the full conception of truth to the reason of the most advanced intellect and meets the moral and religious needs of all intermediate stages. It is thus, like the parable, a natural form of expression adapted to all ages, and to the truth itself.

The Second Creation Document (Gen. ii. 4, etc.).

As has been shown most fully by modern critical study, this second document differs in almost every point from the first, not as an opposed or necessarily contradictory view of creation, but as an entirely different presentation. This difference is most marked—

1. In style and language. We have no longer the set phrases and forms of the oracular or preceptive style, and the use of symbols is much more limited, and is not so much the unconscious symbolism of anthropomorphism, as an intended veiling of thought on one or two mysterious subjects. The use of the combined name Jehovah-Elohim throughout has long since been remarked.

The tendency to discursive amplification, as in the description of the rivers of Eden, is another feature of the style.

2. In point of view. The central thought of the first document is God, His works, His ordained will. That of the second is man, his abode, his origin, the beginning of his moral, religious, and social life. The interest here is thoroughly human, and is especially connected with man's moral nature, and the origin of sin. In this respect it is in touch with the theme and work of the prophetic line of revelation or religious development, as the first document is with that of the priestly.

3. In contents. There are here, as in the first document, ideas derived from reflective generalization of facts of nature and human life. But instead of the study of nature in itself and in its relation to God, we have here the relations of nature to man and to his life. It turns its thought also to man and the questions of his moral development, the origin of sin and of evil, and the beginning of family life, and the general relations of man to his environment. These are embodied in a series of traditions which are remarkable in themselves, but which appear in so many ancient forms and among so many peoples that it is difficult to conceive of them as other than historical though presented in a pictorial and discursive form which enlarges historic tradition by obvious inferences, and sometimes presents both facts and inferences in symbolic form.

4. The part of the document which deals specifically with creation touches only the following points:—

(*a*) Instead of chaos it begins with the primitive unfitness of the earth for the abode of man.

(*b*) It briefly describes the creation of man, (1) in his physical nature "dust"—*i.e.* elementary material from the soil; (2) in his spiritual nature, "inbreathing of God."

(*c*) It describes at length the preparation and location of his primitive abode, enlarging on its geographical relation to what were then known places.

(*d*) It describes the development of his moral nature, his intellect and language, and his social nature and desire for society, in contact with the young world around him, and under special provisions ordained of God.

(*e*) It describes the final completion of his life by the creation of woman, and her being brought to man.

It would be a great mistake to interpret the document, full as it is of the picturesque colouring of the imagination, as if it were a bald chronological record or memorandum. It is rather a pictorial and to some extent symbolical representation of great and important facts, and intended to transmit, in a form which has proved itself capable of perpetual remembrance, the earliest traditions of the race.

Of the nine elements which enter into this representation, three, viz., the garden, the state

of innocency, and the two significant trees, enter into many other ancient traditions. They must have had an origin sufficiently powerful to perpetuate its influence for thousands of years, and among various branches of the human race. Such origin could scarcely be the figment of imagination. It must have been based either directly or indirectly upon some fact of supreme importance, universally known either by common experience or by widely extended tradition.

The geographical locality is a matter of ancient tradition, and is verified by modern ethnology, and thus takes its place on the same basis of original fact.

Of the remaining five elements, the first is negative, the absence from the world of man and his adapted environment; the second is a simple and direct statement of an obvious fact, the formation of man in the two elements of his nature dust from the soil, and inspiration from God; the third is the statement of the Divine order which relates man to his environment by the law of labour, not at first as a curse, but as a good and a duty; the fourth is the statement of another fact, the development of man in thought, language, and emotion by contact with the world of living creatures around him. The last is the Divine bringing together of the sexes; perhaps we have in this the most obvious veiling of mysterious things in symbols. But, however we may interpret the picture, the simple fact is obvious. But while thus every separate element

of this document stands forth as founded on fact, either patent in nature or handed down by tradition, how are we to interpret the presentation, the clothing which has woven the whole into so striking a picture? The answer to this question must be given, not from the standpoint of literature, the human side, but from the religious side, which views the document as a part of the Old Testament.

The key to this we think we have in the fact so clearly revealed by critical study, that this entire document bears the impress of the prophetic style. It was the constant habit of the prophets in all the ages to use both direct and tropical forms in the presentation of religious truth. This we think we certainly have in the garnishing of this and the following chapter. The background shaded by negatives, the order in which the various elements are marshalled, the minor touches of amplification, and perhaps the peculiar account of the formation of woman, never elsewhere referred to in Scripture except on the single point of the order of time, may largely belong to the literary or symbolic elements of prophetic style. It was also characteristic of the prophetic teaching that they employed as the basis of their moral teaching facts of passing history, and traditions of ancient times with which the people were familiar. So here materials gathered from various sources are so interwoven as to present a fundamental view of man in his moral relations and of the origin of sin and evil

which runs through the whole of subsequent Scripture. The document itself is directly referred to in the Book of Job and in the writings of St Paul, and perhaps once in the prophetic books and always on these points. It thus bears not so much on the doctrine of creation as on the doctrine of sin, and we must return to it under that head. The passages in Job do touch the creation of man, and do not favour the old mechanical view of the creation of man's body while they seem to demand the most spiritual view of his higher nature. This second creation document, when reasonably interpreted, can thus in no sense be made to contradict the religious teachings nor even the scientific ideas of the first. Its religious conceptions are fundamentally the same as those of the first. The Creator is the personal God. His will and wisdom order all things for good and right, and man is here a spiritual being, the image and inbreathing of the Spirit of God. The new phases of religious truth pertain rather to the moral nature and history of man than to creation. But here, as in the first document, man's industrial, intellectual, social and moral life are all ordered from his creation by God.

The New Testament Doctrine of Creation.

To complete our biblical view of the doctrine of Creation, we must now advance to that higher point of view afforded by the New Testament, and see how creation is not only linked to the

intuition of God in nature, but also to the more complete revelation of God in His Son Jesus Christ our Lord. If the Old Testament revelation of God as Creator reveals a personal God, then certainly we might expect that the New Testament revelation of this personal God as Triune would involve a special relation of each of the three persons to the work of creation.

It is Paul who first ascribes both creation and Providence to the Son, as he also first brings the doctrine of the Son of God into clear dogmatic recognition. But as St John brings the doctrine of the Divine Sonship into its full and final scriptural statement, so he too completes the doctrine of creation through the Son. "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by Him, and without Him was not anything made that was made." It must not be forgotten that the Master Himself laid a broad and solid foundation for this faith, especially in His teachings, as recorded by St John. "The Son can do nothing of Himself, but what He seeth the Father doing: for what things soever He doeth, these the Son also doeth in like manner. For the Father loveth the Son and sheweth Him all things that Himself doeth." The mystery of creation through the Son or Word of God is but part of the mystery of the Trinity. If in the bosom of the Father there dwelt the Son from eternity, and if in the process of time God's

world was to be the theatre of the Son's mediatorial work and of God's highest revelation of Himself through that Son, then it is but in the order and harmony of these ideas that the Son should be the Divine agent in the creation as well as in the redemption of the world. It is exactly from this point of view that Paul approaches the doctrine. "In whom we have our redemption the forgiveness of our sins; Who is the image of the invisible God, the First-born of all creation; for in Him were all things created, in the heavens and upon the earth, things visible and things invisible, whether thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers; all things have been created through Him and unto Him; and He is before all things, and in Him all things consist." The writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews follows the same line in Heb. i. 2, 3, and xi. 3.

This highest revelation to religious faith links creation with the eternal Trinity of the Godhead, and identifies the Old Testament creative Spirit with the personal Spirit of the New Testament, and thus brings every part of our religious faith from the first idea of God in Creation to His full revelation in our hearts by His Son into perfect unity and harmony. It also completes that moral conception of God as love which is revealed in Jesus Christ, as we find that God through the Eternal Son of His love creates all things, not only through Him, but for Him, filling this world with this Divine love.

Creation is thus not an isolated or accidental event with God, but comes forth as the good-will of that Divine perfection which is in Himself from all eternity in the Trinity of His being.

CHAPTER II

THE ABIDING RELATION OF CREATED THINGS TO GOD

THIS part of our subject is usually treated under the head of Providence; but to religious faith there is a clear distinction between the domain of Providence and that of Natural Law. Providence is connected with moral government and God's relations to His sentient Creation; natural law relates to the physical continuity of God's creation. Providence may have, and we believe really has its foundation in Natural Law, but they are not to religious faith identical conceptions, and religious faith may even conceive of Providence as setting aside or overruling natural law. It is therefore best to consider these two apart. In this case the relation of God to the laws under which He maintains the physical constitution of the universe is most directly related to the creative act by which they were originally established.

The existence of an established order in nature is by no means a discovery of our modern science. The extension of science has vastly increased the range of our knowledge of that

law. It has even introduced it into spheres where its presence was before unsuspected. It has largely eliminated from our intelligent ideas the thought of accident. It has taught us to search for the cause of all things. And this extension of the domain of fixed law has perhaps even served to diminish our religious sense of the presence of God in nature; since we so easily fail to take in more than one point of view at a time. The narrow specialization of our modern science perhaps contributes not a little to this result.

But while modern science has vastly extended our knowledge of specific laws of nature, their existence in general, and the fact of their prevalence even in the most obscure and mysterious fields of nature is recognized in Old Testament times. We cannot read such a passage as Job xxviii. 25, 26, which speaks of a weight for the winds, a measure for the waters, a decree for the rain, and a pathway laid out for the lightning, without recognizing the fact that these things were all under Divine order in the thought of the writer, and that, not as an arbitrary will exercised from time to time, but as a wise and established order. Such an order becomes to them an integral part of religion. It is the form which nature religion takes in the highest development of religious faith. Hence the returning seasons with the fruits of the earth are a covenant of God with man, Gen. viii. 22, and the rainbow in the cloud is the sign of God's

promise that storms shall cease as well as come according to His order. It is a mistake therefore to suppose that the Old Testament fails to recognize orderly law in nature. The men who lived so largely in touch with nature could not fail to observe the reign of law, if not in all things, at least in the greatest things of the world around them.

When, therefore, their religious faith apprehended the immediate presence of God in all His works, in the falling rain, in the thunder and lightning, in the earthquake, in the ebbing and flowing tide, and in the daily movements of the sun, moon, and stars, it is not to be supposed that this religious faith contradicted the idea of fixed law. On the other hand, it clearly included it, and recognized it as a manifestation of the Divine attributes of wisdom, power, and goodness. The order of nature, the energy of all her movements, and the beneficent ends which they served were all alike from God. Such is the teaching of Psalm lxv., civ., cxlv., and many other Old Testament passages.

The peculiarity then of the view which religious faith takes of the relation of God to nature may be described by the term immanency, used, not in the Pantheistic sense of physical contact or identity, but in the truly religious sense of a personal omnipresence. God is infinitely above the creature, and independent of the creature. But He is graciously present with the creature. As Paul has it, "In Him we live, move, and

have our being," "in Him all things consist," and He is "upholding all things by the word of His power."

The scriptural expression of this sense of the presence of God in and to all His creatures is not marked by the refinements of modern philosophy. It says nothing of continuous creation or of consensus. But it clearly contains at least the common-sense recognition of the real being granted to the creature, and the religious recognition of the universal presence of God with that being.

It is easy to unite this religious sense of the presence of God in all nature, which is the primary element of all nature religion, and even precedes the conception of creation itself, with the doctrine of the Divine attributes, and to find in God's constant relation to His world illustrations especially of all the attributes of the first and second classes; and this is most amply done both in the Old Testament and in the New.

The mistake which opposes this religious view of the presence of God in nature to the scientific conception of fixed law arises on the religious side from a narrow view which loses sight of the infinite perfection of the Divine intelligence, and calls in, in its ignorance, miraculous intervention to solve every perplexity in the affairs of the world, and even to answer all the short-sighted desires of its prayers. On the other hand, it arises from that atheistic conception of natural

law which makes the law itself a power competent to effect its ordered results; and so fails to recognize in all law the expression of the wise will and the energy of the immediate presence of God.

CHAPTER III

EXCURSUS ON THE RELATION OF RELIGIOUS FAITH TO SCIENCE

IF the principles which have guided us in our study are correct, it will be seen that there can be no antagonism between true religious faith and true science. There need not be even the appearance of conflict, if it is recognized that each has its own field of truth, and its own Divinely appointed means of learning that truth. The intuitions of faith seek and find beyond nature a firm foundation on which the heart may rest, to which the will may yield its obedience and the conscience its conviction of right, and to which our whole being may render holy reverence, joyful worship, and the deepest affection. This foundation is eternal and immutable in its very nature, for it is God.

The observations and inductions of science, beginning with the senses and completed by the processes of reason, seek for the finite, and the changing, the progressive and orderly works of God in time, and the law which governs that order.

The test of truth here is fact; and the fact is

reached by observation. Religion also demands fact, for, although it finds its own field of truth beyond the finite facts, yet it can only reach that field through the facts. But for this purpose it can take the facts as understood by the science of any age, or even as observed by the "untutored mind" of the unscientific man or the savage himself. Science does, indeed, open up new vistas to faith through the wonderful things of the material world, or through the great laws which marshal the facts of human life and history. But the great essential truths of religion are independent of the refinements, and especially of the theories of science, and are open to the vision of faith in the rising and setting sun, the starry firmament, the changing seasons, the rolling sea, the refreshing rain, and the food and gladness with which God fills even the savage heart.

This is more evident, inasmuch as in all lands religion precedes science, and prepares the way for, and gives the strongest stimulus to her work. A modern scientist even ventures to remark that nature reveals her deepest secrets to devout minds, and if this be true, religion furnishes not only stimulus but spiritual power for the work of science. On the other hand, it is certainly true that the devout scientist finds his religious emotions quickened and his religious faith strengthened, if not even enlarged, as he stands in the presence of nature's wonders as revealed by the telescope, the microscope, and the apparatus of

our modern laboratories. His workshop verily becomes a temple from which his religious heart fervently worships God.

Faith and science are thus placed in God's order in the most helpful and friendly of mutual relations. And it is only when a narrow faith which mistakes the form or channel of its activity for the inner truth, seeks to fetter science by imposing upon it the forms of a past age which were accidentally associated with the record of religious truth, that the appearance of conflict arises; or, on the other hand, when a science which is without faith, in the pride of its discoveries, denies God and imagines that it has reached the eternal foundation of the universe in some new law. Mistaken ideas will of course conflict, both with truth and with each other; but truth, the truth revealed to faith, that revealed to conscience, that revealed to our sense of beauty, and that revealed to reason, and that observed through the physical senses, which are the servants of all the great spiritual faculties of our being, truth is one, and has no conflict with itself, for it is all of God.

The inspired faith of the earlier ages was in this respect far in advance of the theology and dogmatism of our later times. The old time men of faith did hesitate to accept the views of nature of their time, honest views, views founded in facts, and views substantially to their thoughts embodying the facts. These were the vehicles through which they reached the truth of faith,

and by which alone, as we have seen, they could express it to their fellow-men. But there is not the slightest proof that, while embodying religious truth in the forms of thought and language of their own time, they therefore intended to impose these upon all time any more than that they expected the Hebrew language to be spoken in all lands and down to the end of time.

But there was an advantage in the embodiment of religious faith in forms of thought and speech of the world's comparatively unscientific youth. They still suit the thoughts of the great majority of men, and they will always suit the early thoughts of childhood. If the child is ever to reach the highest life even of intellect, and certainly the highest grade of spiritual life, the foundations must be early laid in religious faith. And down to the end of time the beautiful presentations of nature, as opening up vistas through which we can see God, which offered themselves in all their freshness and glory to the world's childhood, will fit the childhood of each successive generation, and serve as their first steps to all higher knowledge. Our children will never be born full-fledged geologists or palæontologists, and the first of Genesis will always be to them a more suitable lesson than Darwin's "Origin of Species." We need only take care not to mix with it a narrow dogmatism which does not belong to it.

There is also a practical lesson to be learned by

the religious faith of all the ages from this study. We need not fear to link our religious faith with the best science of our time. We need not do this in such a way as to make that science a part of our faith. To do so would be to repeat a fatal mistake of the past. But we need not fear to keep pace with science, and to live in hearty sympathy with every effort which it makes by its own legitimate methods for the advancement of knowledge. An attitude of suspicion towards science is entirely unnecessary and prejudicial in every way to the cause of religious truth. Science will, of course, refuse to stand still. Its continuous advance is itself a proof of its imperfection as well as of its power. But we are not freeing ourselves from that imperfection by clinging to the science of a past age because it was once the handmaid of religion. Our true attitude is to make the science of to-day the very best, and the latest if the latest be best, the handmaid of religion for our own age, *i.e.* the avenue through which we shall see God in His works with the fresh, keen vision of new thoughts. From this point of view it is not inappropriate that we devote a paragraph of this excursus to

Evolution.

It is not possible for the theologian to ignore the importance of evolution as the most influential scientific doctrine of our time. It has so

largely shaped his own fields of study that he cannot avoid it if he would; and it has proved itself so richly fruitful of results in every field of scientific investigation, that to ignore it is to deprive ourselves of the most potent of all modern aids in our search for truth. It is without doubt the most universal of the laws of nature as yet discovered by man. Its presence is equally manifest in the world of matter, the world of mind, and the world of history. Its discovery can scarcely be credited to any one man, though Darwin by its application to the field of biology gave it a grand impulse. But even in this field he, if the greatest of the pioneers, was not absolutely first or alone; and we may trace back its influence as brooding over the currents of human thought for centuries or even millennia. But in the last half century it has stepped into the high places of all knowledge, and claimed an imperial sway over every field of human thought except one, *the thought of God.* Faith asserts that He, the infinite, the immutable, the eternal, changes not. What then is the relation of this most wonderful conception of modern science to religious faith? If we have read Gen. i. aright, it is a profound ancient view of nature made a vehicle of sublime religious truth. Is the modern view of the universe capable of being similarly employed and of giving us a fresh outlook upon the perfection of God and the grandeur and glory of His ways? Or does it contradict the conception of

God and His attributes which we derive from religious faith and religious inspiration?

In seeking an answer to this question we are not attempting a new demonstration of the identity of Genesis with modern geology. All such attempts are founded upon a mechanical theory of inspiration, and upon what appears to us a false premise that Genesis was a supernatural anticipation of modern science. There are, without doubt, remarkable points of unity between Genesis and our modern science; but the ground of that unity lies, we believe, in the fact that both are founded in nature, and that nature suggested the same ideas to the profound thinker who lived in open-air communion with her in ancient times, and to the laborious student who has patiently traced the steps of her history in modern times.

A narrow and dogmatic theology and a conceited science equally dogmatic may both miss this deeper ground of unity; and half way men of the same spirit may construct makeshift reconciliations which the very next forward movement of science will cause to tumble to the ground. All this, we think, must be laid aside, because not founded in simple truth. The clashings of the extreme men are unnecessary because arising from radical misconceptions, and the reconciliations of moderate men are worse than useless because they help to perpetuate the misconceptions, while they provide no adequate and permanent remedy for their results. We say this

in no spirit of disrespect to the noble names in science and theology who have made such attempts.

Evolution as a scientific conception, *i.e.* as a broad induction of the great facts of the universe, may be stated as follows :—

It is that law or order in nature under which each successive phase or step of the movement of the universe as a whole, and in each of its parts, takes up into itself all that has gone before, and adding thereto some new increment of perfection passes onward to that which comes after.

This definition is of course exceedingly general, taking no account of decay and elimination, and the struggle for existence and other processes by which the great progress is carried forward.

It is quite evident that this broad conception may assume an agnostic, an atheistic or materialistic, a pantheistic or a theistic form, as it allies itself with one or other school of philosophy. It may also divest itself of all religious spirit and find its whole satisfaction in the intellectual conception which it has formed. This is no fault of the scientific conception ; but of the man who has imbibed an erroneous philosophy, or become dead to religious feeling. It is as if a man stood before a magnificent statue employing his microscope to observe the crystallisation of the marble.

But is there aught in the conception itself alien from the religious spirit? Can it not also lift the soul to a Pisgah from which we may get vision of

the unseen? That this conception is not in conflict with the religious spirit, nay more, that it can help to inspire the most devout and earnest faith, is proved by the life of such a man as the late Professor Drummond. May we not go further, and venture to say that the religious spirit itself has grasped the same idea in the case of St Paul, who, comparing the knowledge of God revealed in Christ with the more imperfect light of preceding ages, sees therein a Divine unfolding of an eternal purpose of God. And may we not go further and say that St Paul grasped this unfolding, not as an outward and formal series of Divine acts, but as the inner working of the living spirit of God dwelling in the hearts of His people. It was this vision of the evolution of the purpose of the ages in the sphere of spiritual life which called out one of Paul's noblest exclamations of devout doxology, "Now unto Him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we can ask or think according to the power that worketh in us, Unto Him be glory in the Church and in Christ Jesus throughout all ages world without end. Amen."

So tracing a moral evolution, which out of the unbelief and disobedience and consequent rejection of the Jews, finds a new and higher life for the Gentiles, and in turn will one day reach its highest fulness by bringing in the Jews themselves, with a sweep of moral power which will be nothing less than a new life from the dead, thus making even decay and moral death work

out a higher perfection; he exclaims with a transported vision of faith, "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and of the knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments, and His ways past tracing out." Ending up with, "For of Him, and through Him, and unto Him are all things. To Him be the glory for ever. Amen."

What is the modern doctrine of evolution but the extension of these Pauline ideas from this highest sphere into all the lower spheres of God's creative work, thus extending the golden chain of Divine purpose, the tracing of which awakened Paul's highest religious emotion, until it binds in one all God's works and all God's ages, from first to last, and from the least to the greatest.

The fact seems to be that, so far from religion being opposed to this conception, religion alone gives it its highest perfection, makes its scope truly universal. It is perhaps not too much to say that its birth in the human mind first came from the religious spirit, and of this same religious faith we believe it is destined to become the noblest of helpers. On the other hand, estranged from the fundamental truth of religious faith, it becomes, not an evolution of ever-increasing glory, but a mere endless permutation of blind forces, working they know not from whence or whither, a purposeless and irrational movement, an incomprehensible series of shifting identities, which confounds alike reason, faith, and every other sense of truth.

The Christian theologian may thus with all boldness lay claim to this and all other modern science as pillars in that great temple of truth, in which religion is the throne of glory from which God reigns supreme in His universe, and on which He is worshipped in spirit and in truth.

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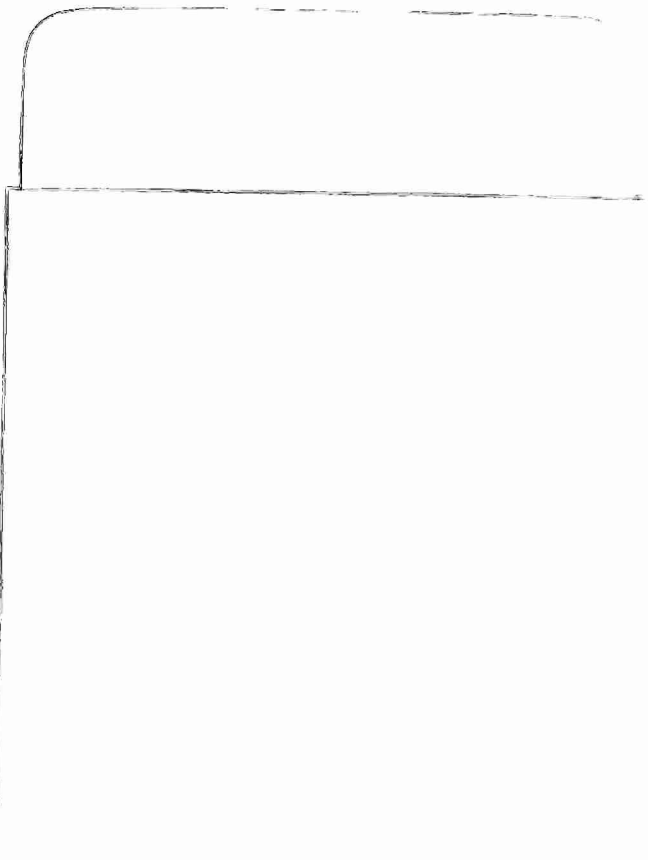

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INDUCTIVE THEOLOGY

MANUAL

OF

CHRISTIAN THEOLOGY

ON THE

INDUCTIVE METHOD

BY

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INDUCTIVE THEOLOGY

DIVISION III.—MAN AS NATURALLY RELATED TO GOD

CHAPTER I

THE NATURE OF MAN IN ITS RELATION TO GOD

THEOLOGY does not properly include any scientific study of the constitution of human nature as such. To that constitution its work is most intimately related, and psychology as well as philosophy must always be an important study to the theologian ; but it will conduce to clearness of thought and prevention of difficulties if we recognise the distinct scope of each of those studies. The fundamental facts as to man's nature which form the basis of anthropology, human physiology, and psychology obviously come into touch with our religious faith, and shape many of its most important convictions. But the relation of these obvious facts to religious faith does not imply a religious authority for any scientific theory of such facts. Doubtless in the New Testament, and perhaps in the later books of the Old Testament, we may observe indications of an elementary psychology such as existed among the

Greeks. But this, like the astronomy or cosmogony of the same age, is but part of the form of thinking and speaking common to the times, and in which the religious ideas in common with all other ideas must be expressed.

As theologians therefore we are not called upon to construct a science of man's nature, but simply to recognise the facts of that nature in their relation to God. By no other facts are the religious intuitions more powerfully called into play. In all the ages the great facts of our physical life, birth, growth, decay, pain, disease, death, have awakened thoughts of God and convictions of His presence and work. And so the facts of our spiritual being, intelligence, conscience, and all the moral elements are recognised as from God, and relating us to Him. The first element of our natural relation to God lies in our physical or material nature. We are not only like all other creatures the work of God, created by Him with the earth on which we live and its inhabitants, and out of its matter, "dust from the soil," but also as material beings are

Subject to the Laws of the Material World.

We have already seen how largely our religious emotions are awakened by the intuitive discernment of God as a being of power, wisdom, and goodness in the events and movements of material nature. This insight of religious faith takes on a new religious aspect, as I find myself the

conscious subject of this great realm of natural law, a weak and helpless creature in the grasp of the mighty forces which with resistless energy move on this great world. We are born as other animals through the operation of a mysterious law of life which governs the beginnings of all life on our planet. Our bodies are nourished by food, and reach their full maturity under laws of development such as govern the whole world around us. Under the same laws they are liable to disease, decay, and death, and to various forms of pain and suffering. Even the laws of physics and chemistry prevail here as elsewhere, contributing to our physical life, limiting its range of power, and exposing it to numerous accidents and dangers. The discernment of these various relations gives rise, like the discernment of all other wonderful provisions in nature, to a devout adoration of the God of nature, an adoration expressed by the psalmist in the oft-quoted words, "I will give thanks unto Thee, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made." But as it touches our personal conscious life, placing our rebellious will or our aspiring ambition under humiliating limitations, and subjecting us to pain and suffering, there arises a very different set of emotions and a deep religious faith apprehends an entirely new set of religious truths. We have these especially set forth in the contemplative literature of the Old Testament, the book of Psalms, the book of Job, and Ecclesiastes. And as our Lord condensed the entire moral teaching of the Old Testament into

such pregnant precepts as the golden rule and the two great commandments, so has he condensed the heaven-given answers to the cry of the human heart in the struggle of physical existence into a few words as remarkable for their poetic beauty as for their perfect religious faith. "Be not anxious for your life, what ye shall eat or what ye shall drink, nor yet for your body what ye shall put on. Is not the life more than the food, and the body than the raiment? Behold the birds of heaven that they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns, and your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are ye not of much more value than they? And which of you by being anxious can add one cubit unto his stature? And why are ye anxious concerning raiment? Consider the lilies of the field how they grow; they toil not neither do they spin; yet I say unto you that even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. But if God so clothe the grass of the field which to-day is and to-morrow is cast into the oven, shall He not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith?" The lesson of these and the following words from the Sermon on the Mount is addressed not to the speculative reason but to the religious faith. It is not an explanation of the problem and mystery of existence, and of our relation to the seemingly inexorable laws of nature, but rather an exhortation to the religious heart, opening thereby its eyes of faith to see a higher truth by which we may live. The lesson to faith which our Lord so beautifully

teaches is (1) that the right ordering of all nature is in the hands of God ; (2) that this order is a work of supreme wisdom ; (3) that it is guided by universal goodness.

This religious faith stands opposed to all materialistic and atheistic conceptions of the universe. God is in His world. "Our God is in the heavens ; He hath done whatsoever He pleased." It recognises the immanent presence and efficiency of God in all the operations of nature. As in the thirty-seventh chapter of Job, it looks out upon the whole face of nature and sees in all things "the wondrous works of Him that is perfect in knowledge." The very first element of this faith is thus a deep, abiding, pervasive conviction of the universal immanent presence and power of God in all things.

Again, it stands opposed to all pessimism, to all conceptions which look upon the world as partially or entirely a failure. To the eye of faith the world is not the work of a prentice hand ; its laws are not a series of experiments ; they represent no blind struggle towards the highest and best, they are the ordering of a perfect knowledge and a perfect wisdom. When this faith again is applied to our personal relations it produces, not the apathetic fortitude of the stoic, but the assured confidence of religious trust. "Your Heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all those things." It involves the element of submission to a wise

universal law, even when it touches us tenderly. Its reply to the tempter is: "What? shall we receive good at the hand of God and shall we not receive evil?" Its conviction of the universal wisdom of the order of the world is such that it places this divine attribute at the very foundation of all things. "The Lord by wisdom founded the earth, and by understanding hath He established the heavens." This wisdom he possessed "in the beginning of His way before His works of old." The answer of faith to all doubt, to all fear, to all suffering, is thus a return to the idea of a wisdom far above our understanding, governing all our relations to the world in which we live.

But this faith includes a supreme goodness in the universal order as well as a perfect intelligence. The proof of this as of the other, our Lord draws from facts of universal experience. God feeds the ravens, clothes the grass of the field. "He opens His hand and satisfies the desire of every living thing." He finds the foundation of faith in facts of the lower nature; but He raises these to their full significance as teachers of our faith when He points out that we are not only creatures but children; hence with the highest claim upon the goodness which is so manifest even in the lower orders of nature —"Your Heavenly Father feedeth them."

But while man stands thus as a part of the physical world and subject to its laws he is on the other hand

The Offspring and Image of God.

"The belief that man is thus related to God seems almost coeval with the belief in God. We find it a part of the primitive faith of the Hebrew people as collected in the Book of Genesis. Paul quotes it from a Greek poet, and the historical study of religions shews that in some form of myth it has entered into the conceptions of almost all peoples. It is quite true that it frequently assumes a grossly materialistic form, but this is only part of a general degeneration which has affected this in common with other elements of religious faith developed by the mythical process. The common truth almost universally recognised is not because of its gross form of presentation altogether deprived of its vital influence as a part of the world's religious faith.

But this faith exists in its most highly developed form only in a purely spiritual religion. Such we have in the Book of Job where we read: "There is a spirit in man and the breath of the Almighty giveth them understanding." This idea is still further expanded by Paul when he describes the image of God after which we have been created as "knowledge," Col. iii. 10, and "righteousness and holiness of truth," Eph. iv. 24. This highest conception of the Divine Image in man resolves it into three elements, the intellectual (knowledge or understanding), the moral (righteousness), and the unity of the two (holiness of truth).

The consciousness of God is thus in the highest form of religious faith followed by a consciousness of relationship to Him, of the most spiritual character, a relationship embracing the very highest elements of our being, and asserting their unity with the essential being of God Himself. This entire unfolding of our spiritual life is purely religious and not speculative. It is not a mere attributing to God of the highest things which we find in ourselves, and thus the creation by our imaginations of a God in our own likeness; but it is first a recognition by the insight of religious faith of the presence of a God of wisdom, goodness, and power in all the world around us; then a recognition that this God is to us a God of truth, holiness and love; then still further a sense of unity with Him in whom we discern the perfection of our own being, which, alas, sin has converted into a sense of terrible separation; and finally a reconciliation which brings us back to our true relationship as children of the Eternal Father. The man in whose heart religious faith has put forth its full work will understand this, and will never make the mistake of confounding it with the shallow work of a myth-forming imagination. It is the spiritual discovery of a great fact, not a theory of the speculative reason, nor yet a fiction of religious imagination. It comes to religious faith with the most perfect conviction of certainty. The fundamental discovery thus made of our spiritual relationship to God carries with it a wide train of religious truths.

Our unity of nature with God combined with our dependence upon Him as His creatures places us in two fundamental relationships to Him, each involving a wide range of practical religious truth which unfolds itself to our faith in the experiences of human life. The first of these centres in our moral nature, but is at the same time religious inasmuch as it involves relationship to God. It is religious responsibility, responsibility to God. The second centres in our religious nature, but is at the same time moral inasmuch as it involves duty. It is that believing strength of soul which finds a Father's hand and loving care in all our way of life, and finds it at once our highest privilege and our bounden duty so to live in trustful love and humble submission toward Him who maketh "all things work together for good to them that love God."

A third field of religious truth opens up through the combination of our spiritual relationship to God, with the place which we occupy among those lower beings who are like ourselves the creatures of God. This too involves both a moral and we had almost said a religious side, had we not consecrated the word religion to express our relation to God alone. We are thus led to the subjects of the three following chapters; the moral government of God over man, the providence of God over man, and man's relationship to the other creatures of God.

Before passing from this study of our nature in its relation to God and His creatures, we must

pause for a moment to consider the relation of the two elements of this nature to each other. If these two elements are, first, a physical nature under universal natural law in common with all the creatures of God, and, secondly, a spiritual nature the image and offspring of God, in religious communion with Him as well as under moral responsibility to Him, then the diversity of these two elements and of their relations must seriously affect our religious and moral as well as our intellectual and sensuous consciousness, and by itself create a class of problems for our religious faith. The full significance of these problems will appear in our detailed study of our relation to God and the world in a religious life. Here we need only state the fundamental principle, that the material and physical is subordinate to the spiritual, and all natural law to the moral and spiritual. This certainly is the order which is in harmony with our religious feeling and faith; and it is as well the order which is affirmed by the facts of experience. The constantly increasing control of physical law which man as a spiritual being is winning for himself, is of itself a demonstration of this. If this is the true order then religious faith seeks in all physical suffering a higher interpretation than that of the physical law under which it takes place. The physical law itself may be justified by the wider good which it effects. The individual may find himself called to suffer under a law which, while to him it works present pain, in its wide range is

clearly beneficent. But he has failed to grasp the full truth regarding his personal suffering until he has come to see that "the light affliction which is for the moment, worketh for us more and more exceedingly an eternal weight of glory; while we look not at the things which are seen, (the physical), but at the things which are not seen (the spiritual); for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal."

CHAPTER II

THE MORAL GOVERNMENT OF GOD OVER MAN

WE have already seen that our spiritual nature involves a twofold relation to God, (*a*) of moral responsibility, and (*b*) of religious faith. These two are inseparably united in all true religion inasmuch as religion includes all that belongs to man's relation to God. In the order of development both in the individual religious life and in the process of revelation at large, the moral side is first, and the full faith of fatherly care and love follows complete moral submission and reconciliation. It is thus that religion begins with fear of God, and only in its highest form reaches to the perfect confidence of reconciliation. This however does not imply that in the religion of godly fear there is no confidence, or that the religion of love excludes the sense of moral responsibility. The perfection of religion unites both in "love fulfilling the law."

The beginnings of moral responsibility either in the individual or in the race are such that they are scarcely matters of conscious observation or historical record. In our individual experience in Christian lands and under religious teaching, the

birth of conscience, and of religious feeling or idea of God, are not far separated in point of time, though probably to very few if any are they matters of distinct remembrance. The earliest remembrances of most men contain both elements as already occupying their place in conscious thought. Corresponding to this are the earliest historic records of all nations. All contain the elements of both moral responsibility and religion. The course of moral and religious development recorded in our Scriptures is no exception to this. They begin with the two ideas of God and moral responsibility. The first of Genesis is not the discovery of God and the founding of religion. Nor is the second of Genesis the discovery of right and the beginnings of divine moral law. Both these documents imply that men were already familiar with these conceptions and that in their language words expressive of them were already in existence. In the book of Genesis the account of the Fall, of Cain and Abel, of Noah and his generation and the Flood, and of the life of Abraham, all evince a clear sense of moral responsibility to a Divine Ruler and to His law of right.

The same thing appears in other nations, in that their earliest traditions make a Divine being their first king, the founder of their national order, and the giver of their law. But this is but a faint reflection of that definite responsibility of man to God's moral government, which stands out so distinctly in Sacred Scripture. This earliest

and universal sense of responsibility to a higher power is not a reasoned thing. Reason attests and confirms it, but it is before reason. It arises directly from conscience and religious faith in their united action. In fact the earliest action of conscience appears to be rather a sense of responsibility to a personal divine authority, than an abstract responsibility for right. Faith recognises God, and conscience recognises his authority and the two together create this universal sense of responsibility to the moral government of the Universe. The fundamental truth which is thus presented to our religious faith is the supreme authority of God, the Divine Sovereignty. This is not to be regarded as a conclusion of reason, something which follows from the fact that God hath made us, and that He has the right to do as He pleases with His own. Such a conclusion could not, we think, lay the foundation of a true moral order. Nor does the authority of God rest in any other way upon His power, as if might were right. To apprehend God in His moral nature, *i.e.*, by the united vision of faith and conscience, is to apprehend His authority and our obligation to obey Him. It may be thought that this doctrine of the direct apprehension of the authority or sovereignty of God is not consistent with that enforcement of this authority by rewards and penalties which is so prominent and important a part of the teaching of Scripture. Rewards and penalties serve a most important purpose both in the establishment

and maintenance of God's moral government. But they do so not by founding obedience upon fear or hope of reward, which would be no moral government at all; but by their continuous illustration and assertion of the principle of divine justice. "The Lord is known by the judgments which he executes." Rewards and penalties are but the continuous manifestation to us of the righteous character of God, and it is as a righteous God that we apprehend his authority over us.

"Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever,
A sceptre of equity is the sceptre of Thy Kingdom.
Therefore God, thy God hath anointed thee
With the oil of gladness above thy fellows."

However, we may interpret this passage, as referring to divine or human authority, it certainly founds authority in equity. Moral judgments as rewards and penalties thus become the revealing facts by which God is known as a holy and just God, ruling in all the earth, and through which we recognise His authority over us. This authority is an actual fact, which religious faith recognizes in its active exercise in the just judgments of God.

Side by side with this divine authority stands God's established moral order or law in the universe. The idea that certain things are right and others wrong, or that certain things are required by God and others forbidden, and that such requirements and prohibitions constitute His law, dates back beyond the beginnings of history. When there came to Abraham the revelation, "I am the Almighty God, walk before

Me and be thou perfect," there is already implied a known rule or standard of such perfection. Of such law we have clear evidence in the tradition of Noah and the second and third of Genesis, whether interpreted allegorically or literally, also imply such a rule. The peculiar work of Moses was the giving of law as the ordinance of God, and the high moral perfection of that law constituted the ethical superiority of the Hebrew over other ancient religions. Like other early forms of moral law it embodied ethical principles in the form of specific commands, and its decalogue is to this day pre-eminent as a comprehensive collection of such commands, unsurpassed in the breadth of its range, the simplicity of its statement, and the universality of its adaptation to the varying conditions of human society. It is supplemented by numerous specific judgments adapted to local and temporal conditions but embracing the same principles of equity; and also by instituted observances, religious, social, and political, useful for the maintenance of religious life, moral order, public health, and social convenience, and all acting as a means of the education of the people and their advancement to a higher moral status. But all appear as divine law, sanctioned by divine authority and enforced by divinely ordered rewards and penalties. All this implies among this people a faith in God's moral government of the most profound and influential character, a law of God for every aspect of their life, and a sense of re-

sponsibility attaching to all their doings. The form in which this religious faith and responsibility were expressed was suited to the age, and the conditions of human life, and to the stage of human development. Many of these forms served as types or shadows or preparations for the better things to come, and, when the more perfect things came, were destined to pass away. To maintain these preparatory forms or ideas in an advanced age would be superstition. But to lose sight of the fundamental principle which they expressed, would in any age be irreligion as well as immorality.

Under the teaching of Christ the form of moral law assumes a higher stage. It is no longer the regulations of the schoolmaster, but the broad principles of a court of equity. There is not even a specific re-enactment of the decalogue, though from its purely ethical character it can never grow old or pass away; but these ten commandments are all merged in one new one, "that ye love one another," and yet are in full force as specific examples under the general law. But it is unnecessary at this point to enter minutely into the question of detailed ethics or christian duties. A moral order or law of God over men is recognized as a part of religious faith.

The third point recognised by religious faith is the continuous enforcement of this law in human life. Two early traditions recorded in the book of Genesis present this aspect of religious faith very clearly. Cain is punished as an individual

for a particular sin. The antediluvian world is punished as a whole for universal corruption. The cities of the plain are an intermediate example of judgment upon a sinful community. It is not necessary to suppose that in each of these cases the judgment was altogether of a miraculous character, or independent of the operation of the laws of nature. The essential element is the recognition by religious faith of the direct presence of God in these facts of history, and of their moral character as judgments of God against sin. That this faith runs through the entire Old Testament is too evident to need detailed proof. In fact the earliest development of ideas in morals, religion and politics was of this communal character. Christianity first begins to exalt the individual and to develop his individuality and personality, especially along ethical lines. But while in this way our Lord's teaching corrects many of the sweeping conclusions of older times, and evolves new aspects of Divine providence which reveal the Father as well as the Moral Governor, the last book of the New Testament returns to that broad ethical interpretation of history which sees the judgments of a just God, in the overthrow of nations as well as in the sufferings at times of individual men. Ananias, Herod, and Elymas are examples of the individual, and the overthrow of Jerusalem and the downfall of the Roman Empire are national illustrations. Our Lord does not annul the teaching of the older faith; but corrects its

too harsh spirit by opening up to faith other aspects of God's dealings with the children of men. The stern course of a rigid justice is intermingled with the glorious mercy of a far reaching optimism bringing in a universal kingdom not only of righteousness but also of truth and love.

This entire conception of religious faith in the moral government of God over the world, the nations, and individual men, is one of those ideas by which religion lifts man to a higher dignity. The governor and the governed must in the very nature of this relation have life in common. He who commands and those who obey must understand each other. A common end must be possible to both, and a common enjoyment of that end is if not necessary at least probable. It is as made in the image of God and capable of entering into community of life with Him that we become the subjects of His Kingdom. We shall see presently how this natural relation passes into one of grace, as this providential government becomes mediatorial, and all authority in heaven and in earth is transferred to the Son, that through Him all things may be reconciled to God. But before we enter on this, another chapter must be written on the origin, nature, and results of sin.

CHAPTER III

THE PROVIDENTIAL CARE OF GOD OVER MAN

NO subject enters more largely into the world's religious faith than this. In pure faith, enlightened and inspired by the Spirit of God, it has given us the most beautiful, the most elevated, and satisfying religious ideas, such as have made so many of the Hebrew psalms the delight of men of every age and clime. And where faith has been mingled with human passion and obscured by the fancies of human imagination, here more than anywhere else they have run riot in fable and myth. The universal care of the Almighty Father, administered in justice and mercy, and in impartial and universal goodness and love, has passed over into the favour of countless subordinate beings, to each of whom some sphere of influence is assigned, and whose favour is to be propitiated in some special fashion. Next to its conception of God Himself a religion may be estimated by its doctrine of Providence. In fact its doctrine of Providence is the practical illustration of its conception of the character of God. In the Old Testament we have, as is natural, a very full expansion of the doctrine of God's providential

care first over all sentient beings, next over the whole world of mankind, and last and most fully expanded over his chosen people and elect men. This last subject would be easily misapprehended if it is not remembered that at this point the general doctrine of providence passes over into that of God's purpose and Kingdom for the world's salvation. The new Testament teaching carries the whole doctrine up to its final consummation of perfect unity of saving grace with universal providential goodness, and of both with the perfect justice of moral government. We have thus for Christianity a comprehensive and perfect doctrine of providence such as is afforded by no other religion. It is the providence of one God and Father of all who is over all, and who worketh all for good and right and truth according to the perfect counsel of His own will. The first element of this doctrine, God's tender care for all His sentient creatures, we have already largely considered under the head of our relation to the laws which govern the material world. The teaching of the Scriptures is that those laws are all ordered with a view to the provision for the wants of the sentient creation. Thus the changes of the seasons are a divine order and promise for the perpetual welfare of man and beast. So the psalmist describing all the works of nature after the order of the first of Genesis, makes each of them in turn conduce to the good of sentient creation. The springs which run among the mountains and into the valleys give drink to

every beast of the field, and by them the wild asses quench their thirst and the fowls of the heaven have their habitation. "He causeth the grass to grow for the cattle and herb for the service of man; that He may bring forth food out of the earth, and wine that maketh glad the heart of man; and oil to make his face to shine; and bread that strengtheneth man's heart." And so after describing the various orders of sentient nature he concludes thus; "These wait all upon Thee, that Thou mayst give them their meat in due season. That Thou givest them they gather; Thou openest Thine hand, they are satisfied with good. Thou hidest Thy face, they are troubled, Thou takest away their breath, they die, and return to their dust." This is but an example of the way in which to the religious faith of ancient times, all the order of nature as they understood it, revealed the provisions of a tender care of God over all his works as of a Father over his children. This is not an interference with, or suspension of the laws of nature for special purposes of mercy, but such an original constitution of these as makes provision for the wants and well-being of all creatures.

The wide researches of our modern science in the field of natural law have not interfered with this faith. They have rather vastly strengthened it, by multiplying a thousand-fold the examples in which it is manifest to the devout investigator of God's works. But from this general providential care which man shares

in common with all sentient creation, religious faith rapidly ascends to the idea of a special providential care over man as God's creature made in His own image, and hence capable of standing in more peculiar relations to himself. This idea is founded in the provisions of general law, for it recognises man as sharing in the beneficent provisions and order, which supply the wants of all other creatures. But it introduces even into these a moral order. Hence seedtime and harvest, and cold and heat, and summer and winter, and day and night are not only an order of natural law ordered by God for the world; but also to religious faith a divine covenant of promise to man. As we pass from this order of nature for man to the order of men themselves as nations, and the bounding of their habitations, this again is the order of God; He "gave to the nations their inheritance, He separated the children of men and set the bounds of the peoples." The psalmist takes a still wider range when he says, "The Lord looketh from heaven, he beholdeth all the sons of men, from the place of His habitation he looketh forth upon all the inhabitants of earth, He that fashioneth their hearts alike, that considereth all their works." These passages exhibit the general tone of the Old Testament as to this general providence of God. God's eye is upon all the children of men; none are hidden from his sight or forgotten before him; all are partakers of his universal goodness to his creatures. But his moral government and his

judgments are ever in the forefront, and one has only to read consecutively a few chapters from any part of the book of Psalms to see how largely the idea of moral government and justice predominates in the religious thought of that age as to the general relations of God to men. And yet this general severity of the Old Testament is here and there lightened by conspicuous examples of God's mercy to the outside nations, such as we have to Nineveh in the sometimes despised book of Jonah. Perhaps the secret of this narrower view of the faith of the ancients lay in the facts of the case. Their faith passed not beyond the facts of their experience; and in the midst of abounding wickedness, that experience was of judgment more frequently than of mercy. The exceptions prove that they could discern the mercy of God in the outside world as well as toward the chosen people. But whether without or within it is clear that to their faith mercy must have a moral foundation. It is a repentant Nineveh which experiences the divine mercy.

As might be expected the spirit of Christianity wonderfully extends this broader outlook of the older Hebrew faith. Our Lord Himself works under the limitation of a mysterious but conscious mission to the chosen people. Personally he was sent "to the lost sheep of the House of Israel." But while his present mission was particular, His spirit was universal. The Syrophenician woman was partaker of the benefits of his miraculous power, and the universal goodness of

God as displayed in the provisions of nature which he made a lesson for all his followers, and the parable of the good Samaritan are illustrations of the breadth of his loving spirit. But as he drew to the end of his mission to his own, and felt the pangs of final rejection, while the end was to be otherwise, there is something almost prophetic in the words of his bitter foes, "Will he go to the Dispersion among the Greeks and teach the Greeks?" And when once they came to him and "would see Jesus," he felt that "the hour is come that the Son of Man should be glorified." And so His final commission is "Go ye into all the world and preach the Gospel to the whole creation." The religious spirit of Christ himself is thus clearly proven to be broad as humanity, and in all His teaching whether of providence or of grace there is perfect consistency with this wide charity. The prodigal son as well as the elder son who abode in his father's house have each their place in the father's love. And consequently, as the spirit of Christ expands His teaching in the preaching of the Apostles, it soon becomes apparent that "God is no respecter of persons." The opening up of Christianity to the Gentiles was itself an order of Providence, a revealing event, which opened up to Christian faith the universality and impartiality of God's purposes, and of the administration of his moral government. And we have the final culmination of that faith in the magnificent view of the dispensations of the fulness of

time presented by Paul in the Epistle to the Ephesians, in which he sees providence and grace united in Christ, and working all things in the history of all the ages to one grand consummation for the overthrow of sin, the salvation of men, and the reconciliation of the whole universe to God. In Christ to Paul's faith providence and grace are one; and both reach out in mercy and goodness to every creature of God.

Special Providence, Prayer and Miracle.

No study of our religious faith as to the relations of God to nature and to man would be complete which failed to recognize the belief of men in a special as well as a general providence over men, resulting in special answers to prayer, even to the extent of miraculous intervention of Divine power for that purpose. This is a faith quite distinct from, though related to, the appearance of the supernatural, as revealing God in His great forward steps in the evolution of the universe. Does the special hand and purpose of God reach thus, even to the least, by distinct acts as well as by universal and beneficent law? Rightly or wrongly, whether by true leading of the Divine Spirit or by human error, this has been the religious faith of past ages, and is embodied in the religious faith presented in our Scriptures. It is equally evident that the moderate and rational presentation of this faith which appears in Scripture, and especially in the

New Testament, has been distorted and exaggerated beyond the true mean of religious truth, and this in our own and past ages has often become superstition—that is, an irrational and unreal religious faith, a faith not only contradicting reason, but also untrue to actual fact. The study of this faith is, therefore, a matter of great practical importance, that we may recognize, define, and defend the true religious faith, as well as reject that which is false.

The questions thus presented are all questions of fact, and can be properly answered only by a strictly inductive examination. In this way we must first of all ascertain the exact religious faith of Scripture: what does it actually affirm on this point, either in its records of human experience or in its interpretation of that experience, whether as promise, as thanksgiving, or as exhortation? Again, what are the limitations, if any, of this faith? Are there moral or natural laws which God never transcends or transgresses in His special care over men and His answers to their prayer?

So also in the vindication of this faith, as of all religious faith, we must see first of all that it is founded on actual revealing facts, and that our interpretation of these facts is not only religious, but also reasonable, moral, and fitting.

We have already found in the Old Testament a doctrine of a special providence of God over His people, answering their prayers, and extending even to miraculous intervention on their

behalf. The most conspicuous examples are those of Joshua commanding the sun to stand still on Gibeon and the going back of the dial for Hezekiah. We need not enter into the difficulties of the exposition of these passages, or their reconciliation with modern science. For a satisfactory solution of the problems which they present we may now be without the requisite data. One thing is clear, they represent a high type of faith in special providence, answer to prayer, and special Divine intervention. This certainly was the religious faith of the Old Testament writers, whatever may have been the nature of the physical facts by which that faith was called out in these and other special cases. These historical examples are also in harmony with almost numberless promises and other forms of religious expression in the psalms and other Old Testament writings.

In the New Testament our Lord, we think, clearly and in direct terms inculcates the same faith in His teaching on prayer in the sermon on the Mount, "Ask and ye shall receive," etc.; in such words as "The very hairs of your head are all numbered"; in promises such as "It shall be given you in that hour what ye shall speak." The faith thus expressed is carried out in many passages of the Apostolic writings. St James gives us a conspicuous example in his directions as to prayers for the sick.

In the exercise of this faith there are, however, in the New Testament clearly defined limiting

safeguards. The first of these is the law of faith: "All things whatever ye pray and ask for, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them," or "believe that ye laid hold of them, and ye shall have them," "they shall be to you."

Such faith as is here expressed is not a thing of chance or occasional exercise at the mere will of man. It is possible only to the soul living in communion with God, and in the spirit of deepest sympathy with and submission to His will. Those who have exercised this faith, and have received its joyful answer, will understand this, and also the fact that there are times when it cannot be exercised however much flesh and blood may so desire. Our Lord himself said, when the spirit was willing but the flesh weak, "Father, if it be possible." The law of faith is thus not a license to ask what we will after a carnal and human sort, but a limitation to the asking of that true faith which brings the soul into harmony with God.

It is almost the same thing to say that such intervention is again limited by the general, and to us often inscrutable, purposes and order of God. In many things God's purpose and order may include our asking and His special giving in ways which seem outside the ordinary course of nature. But to the devout soul which can thus ask and receive in the fulness of religious joy, this asking has in it always something of the sacred spirit of Gethsemane. St James tells us clearly that there is an unanswered prayer,

"Ye ask and receive not, because ye ask amiss." Even in the Old Testament the Psalmist had said, "If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me." Another aspect of this law of limitation is thus the law of moral right.

But under this law of limitation, is this religious faith either inconsistent with facts, or in itself unreasonable? We think not.

1. Unless we are to disbelieve the testimony of all religious history, we must admit that religious men have experienced direct answers to prayer. And even apart from their testimony, there are facts in human history which religious faith insists on interpreting as special providences of God; and some of them of such a character that their special and even miraculous nature can scarcely be disputed. This aspect of the question is entirely one of evidence as to historic fact. We have no hesitation in accepting this evidence in many instances. In fact, we think there are few deeply religious men who have not had some illustration of the truth in their own experience.

Nor is such faith to us unreasonable. Only a transcendental or Deistic theory of the relation of God to His world excludes the possibility of such things as special providence and answer to prayer. If God dwells in and rules His universe as mind dwells in and rules the body, then this doctrine is not inconsistent with fixed laws and order in nature. It is only proof of the subtle perfection of the provisions and order of nature that, like the keys of a grand instrument of music, they are

every moment responsive to the will of the ever-present and presiding God. Nor is the intervention of man's will through prayer inconsistent with the perfection of the Divine purpose and order. It is but another example of that high moral order in which God calls us to use means that through the very using higher qualities may be developed in ourselves. Through labour as a means our physical strength is developed. Through thought and planning as means, our intellectual powers are exercised ; and so through a law of prayer, and through the evident though special exercise of Divine providence, men are kept in conscious touch with God Himself, and the very highest qualities of their spiritual being are called into full and continuous exercise. There is thus nothing unreasonable in this faith, nor is it in any way inconsistent with that perfection of the Divine order and character which our modern science of God's works has raised to so pre-eminent a place in our thoughts.

CHAPTER IV

THE RELATION OF MAN TO OTHER CREATURES

RELIGION regards man not only as God's creature but also as placed in God's world. It assumes for man a dominion over that world, but a dominion with responsibilities and duties as well as prerogatives. While in the world, he stands at the head of the material creation, and while his fellow-creatures are given him for his use and service, the religious spirit regards them all as creatures of God, thus holding through the Divine no mean relation to man himself. To say that they minister to his physical necessities, provide him food and raiment; help him in his toil, and augment his pleasures, is only to present the lowest and most obvious side of that relationship. The deeper spirit will find in the whole creation by which we are surrounded, a sympathetic environment engaged with us in the service of the Creator, and uniting as it were in a universal worship of the one God who is over all. Thus the very least of these works will command a reverent regard. There will seem to be nothing mean, nothing useless, nothing to be abhorred or scorned in God's world. Not merely our fellow-men, but other sentient creatures, will claim and receive

their just meed of kindly treatment and help, avoiding the unnecessary, and alleviating all necessary pain of life.

That this aspect of the religious spirit is not a mere refinement of modern sentiment is obvious from the history of the ancient religions. With some of them the greater objects of nature, and the more majestic forms of animal life, came to be regarded as the special abodes of the Divine Spirit, and even received worship as gods. But in all, the purer faith saw the work of Divine wisdom and power, and from them seemed to hear a universal anthem of praise to God. "The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament sheweth his handiwork."

"Praise ye the Lord from the heavens;
Praise Him in the heights;
Praise ye Him, all His angels:
Praise ye Him, all His host.
Praise ye Him, sun and moon;
Praise Him, all ye stars of light.
Praise Him ye heavens of heavens;
And ye waters that be above the heavens.
Let them praise the name of the Lord;
For He commanded and they were created.
He hath also stablished them forever and ever:
He hath made a decree which shall not pass away.
Praise the Lord from the earth,
Ye dragons and all deeps,
Fire and hail, snow and vapour;
Stormy wind fulfilling His word:
Mountains and all hills;
Fruitful trees and all cedars;
Beasts and all cattle,
Creeping things and flying fowl.

Kings of the earth and all peoples ;
Princes and all judges of the earth ;
Both young men and maidens ;
Old men and children :
Let them praise the name of the Lord
For His name alone is exalted :
His glory is above the earth and heaven."

The complement of this wonderful hymn of the Old Testament is to be found in the words of the Master as he takes us to the lilies of the field and the birds of the air to teach us lessons of religious faith.

A far more difficult question for religious faith is our relation to higher spiritual beings. That such beings exist in other parts of the universe, and that they are visitors if not frequenters of our world has been the common belief of all the ages. We cannot place this faith on the same level with our faith in God as if he were one of these unseen beings, for by the insight of faith we see Him actually present in all His works. If he is not manifest to sense, His works are so manifest, and in His works by faith we discern Himself, with the same certainty with which the chemist discerns the force of affinity behind the visible changes which take place in his crucible or alembic. But of the works of unseen created beings we have no such visible certainty. We cannot certainly distinguish their works, if such there be, from those of men on the one hand or from those of God on the other ; nor have we any spiritual sense by which we can apprehend their presence in their works. So far as we know

they can only be directly recognised as they supernaturally assume material form, or as we are occasionally endowed with a supernatural sight, if such is indeed the case. The entire subject of the existence, the nature, the work of unseen spiritual beings, and of their relation to us and ours to them is thus shrouded in mystery. And yet the belief in such beings not only exists among men, but has been fruitful above all other fields of religious faith in giving free scope to imagination, conjecture, and even imposture. It is a field therefore in which the greatest care is needed to distinguish true religious faith from superstitious fancies.

Perhaps the most fully assured of all the elements of this religious faith is the continued existence of the spirits of men after death. If this is a fact, then there are somewhere in God's world a vast host of spiritual beings who were once men of like passions with ourselves, and who are thus most intimately related to us, our brother men, with knowledge of our life, even our parents, and our children, the objects of our personal affection. There are many things in our personal relations to these beings which are not matters of religion, for all religion must centre in God, not in ourselves or in our fellow-creatures except through God. The whole subject of spiritualism, even if it were not an imposture, is not a part of religion unless the spirits bring us a message from God. The faith in the immortality of the spirits of men does not, we think, rest in

visions, or clairvoyance, or the special sight of so-called media, but is a direct outcome of our entire moral and religious consciousness, as quickened, guided, and inspired by the Holy Spirit. The religious faith which believes with strong assurance that we are the image and likeness of God, that we are His children, cannot believe that this image was made to perish, that these children will not live to love and serve Him for ever. By whatever types and shadows God may first have led men up to faith in immortality, certainly in the matured Christian faith belief in immortality is founded in our deepest religious intuition. As our Saviour taught, it is because God is our God that we all live and shall live to Him. This faith certainly is found in the Old Testament, but in the New Testament it stands out pre-eminent, building upon the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ, and unfolding to us one of the most important chapters of our religious faith, which we shall hereafter consider under the heads of the intermediate state and the final consummation. In this faith we are united with all the saved and the holy of the past, the present or the future, in a Divine and glorious service which passes into eternity. But the religious faith both of the Old Testament and of the New apprehends also another class of unseen spiritual beings, some of them holy and with us fellow-servants of God, and some sinful and malignant. The origin of this belief it is difficult to trace, but it appears very distinctly at or after the captivity. Even

the translation of earlier passages may be doubtful, as the words used either have an original material significance as clouds, fire, winds, light, or are expressive of acts, as malaak and ἄγγελος, Messenger, and Satan, the accuser or enemy. But in the later books there can be no doubt as to their personal application to unseen beings, some good and others evil.

This belief undoubtedly passes into the New Testament, and appears in a very distinct form in the Gospel record of the miracles of Christ so largely described as the casting out of devils. The angels also appear very fully in the book of Revelation, and occasionally in other books.

It must be borne in mind that any view of the nature of these beings which may have prevailed in the Old Testament or in the New is no more a part of our religious faith than is their view of astronomy or geology. They are without doubt regarded as the cause of both evil and good to men. Obscure forms of disease are ascribed to their agency, which our modern pathology would otherwise account for. But apart from the forms of speech natural to the strongly pictorial imagination of the orientials, the nature of these unseen causes was, we think, as obscure to them as it is to the rigid scientific thought of our own day. The New Testament writers make no attempt to explain the nature of these beings, but use them simply as messengers of the revelation and providence of God towards men. They are "all ministering spirits sent forth to minister unto

them who shall be heirs of salvation. If St Paul by the expressions "principalities and powers in heavenly places" and other like phrases, refers to such beings, he links us with them in a vast spiritual universe, over which Christ stands Lord and King; but even then he does not lift the veil of mystery as to their nature. This field of angels and demons becomes thus a dangerous field for the play of a religious imagination, easily lending itself to superstition, and with the related field of the spirits of the departed, has contributed more than any other to superstitious accretions to the pure Christian faith. Already in Paul's time this tendency had made its appearance, and he warns the Colossians against "the worshipping of angels" and "the dwelling on visions," or "on things which he hath not seen," placing these in the same dangerous category with the multiplication of or superstitious clinging to Jewish ordinances, to the neglect of Christ our Head. To Paul's experience these things were utterly without moral or religious "value against the indulgence of the flesh," Col. ii. 16-23. The true religious spirit of Christianity thus does not encourage us to surround ourselves with a multitude of unseen spiritual beings, depending on them for supernatural suggestions and help in the duties and difficulties of life, a course which must weaken rather than build up a robust moral and spiritual life. Nor does it depress us by the constant thought of malignant beings against whose superior power and machinations we are helpless,

a belief which again is far from conducive to moral and spiritual strength. It does indeed recognise the vast unfathomable mystery of the universe by which we are surrounded, and our relation to the unseen powers which dwell in that region of mystery, and it presents them in the forms commonly used in the Apostolic age by both Jew and Gentile as personal powers, a form doubtless susceptible of abuse, but not more so than the purely materialistic form used to-day. If the one may pass into superstition, the other just as readily lends itself to the substitution of blind mechanical force for spiritual will in all things.

But while thus recognising the mysterious powers of the universe in the midst of which we live, it places them all under the supreme control of God, and it makes our life a life hid with Christ in God, "angels and principalities and powers" being all made subject to him.

DIVISION IV.
HUMAN RESPONSIBILITY AND SIN

THE subject which now opens up before us must not be confounded with ethics. Ethics deals with truth as to the right and wrong of actions as determined by our moral judgments. Our subject, on the other hand, is strictly religious; it deals with an important aspect, perhaps the most important aspect of our relation to God. But it opens up the fact that our relation to God is not merely one of emotion and affection, but also one which embraces the whole range of our moral being as well. This moral side of religion or of our relation to God is expressed by the word responsibility. The word has a wide range of application to moral beings, expressing their relation to authority of all kinds, and becomes thus a most important term in ethics. Its religious application is at once the highest and most important, denoting as it does our relation to the supreme authority in the universe. The doctrine of responsibility is thus not so much parallel with ethical science as with jurisprudence, and, like jurisprudence, makes use of ethics as geology makes use of chemistry or physics. It brings conscience and moral law into the domain and service of religion.

The field of investigation thus opened up includes a large number of facts obvious in human consciousness and in the moral and religious history of mankind as well as in Holy Scripture. The nature of responsibility in general and of our responsibility to God in particular, the development of that responsibility by probation, the result of probation in sin, the outcome of sin in guilt, evil, depravity, and penalty, all these present themselves as matters of most careful investigation as they have been unfolded in the New Testament in the light of its Divine inspiration. The religious and moral insight of humanity has never reached a higher plane or expressed itself in such perfection as here.

CHAPTER I

RESPONSIBILITY

RESPONSIBILITY includes not only an inward or subjective sense of obligation, the *ought* of conscience, but also the real objective relation in actual facts corresponding thereto. This implies a real person obligated, a person or authority to whom he is obligated, and an adequate power by which the obligation may be enforced. It is not sufficient to say that conscience enforces the obligation. Granted that in a normally active conscience this is the case, how came this to be so? If we are the creatures of God, and He made conscience to enforce moral obligation, has He other means and ways of enforcing it? If the sense of obligation represents an eternal and immutable truth, a law of right, then evidently He has fashioned conscience according to that law, and in other things and in all things we may expect that the Creator of conscience will work according to that same law of right. Conscience thus becomes the witness for the Moral Ruler to whom and by whom we are held to the obligation which it asserts. God thus stands out in the very forefront of the obligation which conscience asserts, and the imperative of conscience becomes responsibility to God or a part

of our religion. The relation of conscience to all human obligation or responsibility is different. Conscience also supports and affirms this in so far as it judges it in harmony with right, but on the other hand it may reverse the obligation asserted or imposed by an unjust human law or authority.

Religious responsibility is thus the obligation by which we are held to God as our Creator to do His will revealed as the law for our life. Under this law man is held to answer for his acts, not only to his own conscience and to his fellow men to whom he owes duty, but supremely to God his Creator. Conscience is but the incorporation of this obligation in man's own nature and this incorporation is repeated in the entire constitution and history of the world in which man lives; in other words that world is governed and ordered by moral law. Conscience is thus the subjective side of responsibility; it compels us to accept as right the consequences of our own acts imposed by the law of right as well in their form of penalties as of rewards. Our deepest sense of truth says it is right, it ought to be.

Thus far the facts are so obvious both in our conscience and in the teaching of Scripture that detailed proof is unnecessary. But given the fact that responsibility to God truly exists on the basis of a Divine law or laws of right, we must next inquire

1. Are all men so responsible?

2. Are they responsible for all their acts, *i.e.*, at all times and under all circumstances?

3. Are they responsible only as individuals? or, are they also collectively responsible?

The first two of these questions may be answered together. The common verdict of our moral judgment does not hold all men to unconditional responsibility. An idiot is not held to be responsible, nor is an insane person, nor a child. The moral nature must be sufficiently developed and sound to enable a man to know the right from the wrong. Such moral nature Paul recognises in the gentile world, "in that they show the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience bearing witness therewith, and their thoughts one with another accusing or else excusing them." It is only thus that he declares that "as many as have sinned without law shall perish without law," while "as many as have sinned under law shall be judged by law."

This last passage opens up a still further condition of moral responsibility. To a moral nature and capacity for moral action must be added a measure of light, of truth, of knowledge from without of that which is required by law. This knowledge, if not in actual possession, must at least be within man's reach. This principle of moral judgment is again recognised in all those Scriptures which measure increase of responsibility by increase of light, Matt. xi. 20-24; xxv. 14, etc., and especially John iii. 19, "This is the condemnation that light is come into the world,"

and John ix. 41, "Jesus said unto them, If ye were blind, ye would have no sin, but now ye say We see; therefore your sin remaineth."

Again our common moral judgment limits responsibility by ability. This limitation, like the previous one must be carefully guarded. As in the case of knowledge so in that of ability, responsibility extends to that which lies within our reach as well as to that in our actual possession, and to that which has been lost or forfeited through our fault as well as to that which is at present enjoyed. But the general principle of responsibility according to ability is clearly taught by our Lord himself in such passages as Luke xii. 4, 8, where it is associated with knowledge: "But he that knew not and did things worthy of stripes shall be beaten with few stripes. And to whomsoever much is given of him shall much be required. And to whom they commit much of him will they ask the more." The careful form of expression here used guarding against abuse of the principle is very worthy of note. It is put in the positive form. The alleged absence of knowledge or ability does not prove no responsibility, but still responsibility grows with knowledge and ability; hence these are of its essence, and of these it would appear that our Lord did not regard any man as entirely devoid.

But given these three conditions of responsibility, a moral nature, knowledge and ability, the next question is, How does responsibility attach? Does it belong only to the

individual person? or can it be attached to a body or society of men collectively, or even to the whole race as a race? The answer of history and of common moral judgment seems to be that responsibility may be attached to all these, but in a different manner in each case. There can be no question that, given the foregoing conditions, each man is held to personal and individual responsibility for his acts, even though those acts be done in connection with others. This again is the verdict of the common sense of right and the clear teaching of Scripture. In the Old Testament such a passage as Ezek. xviii. throughout is very emphatic: "The soul that sinneth it shall die." In fact, the teaching of the passage is that no form of hereditary responsibility can override individual responsibility. In the first and second chapters of Romans we have also a very clear assertion of the responsibility of all classes of men, including those from the Gentile world, and this extends "to every soul of man that doeth evil" (Rom. ii. 9). "Their being without law does not exempt them" (ver. 12), for (ver. 15) "they show the work of the law written in their hearts." There is in this passage certainly the strongest assertion of a universal individual responsibility of all classes of men upon which the eternal destiny of each man individually is made to depend. God "will render to every man according to his works" (ch. ii. 6; so also Gal. vi. 5, 7, 8, 9).

But in addition to this supreme individual

responsibility there is also clearly set before us in the moral judgment of mankind a responsibility which attaches to men in solidarities, *i.e.* as families, communities, and as an entire race, both contemporaneous and successive. This is very fully recognised in Scripture in the case of Sodom, Gen. xviii. 23-32; of family succession, Ex. xx. 5, 6, and xxxiv. 7; Num. xiv. 18, 33; Deut. iv. 40; Ps. xxxvii. 25, 26; Jer. xxxii. 39. Nor is the teaching confined to the Old Testament, for our Lord Himself clearly recognises this continuity and solidarity of God's great moral judgments, when He says to the Jews of His own day, "Fill ye up then the measure of your fathers," "that upon you may come all the righteous blood shed on the earth, from the blood of Abel the righteous unto the blood of Zachariah, the son of Barachiah, whom ye slew between the sanctuary and the altar. Verily I say unto you, all these things shall come upon this generation."

This doctrine of a common responsibility, which is thus continued by our Lord from the Old Testament into the New, and which is generally recognised in human jurisprudence as well as by common conscience, receives its fullest expansion from St Paul in the fifth chapter of Romans 12-19. This passage, which we need not quote *in extenso*, as it will be familiar to all our readers, gives us the most complete and direct statement of the historical outcome of the principle of a common responsibility or moral unity of the race. The race is,

1. One in its moral development. The good or evil of one blesses or harms the whole. The penal consequences of the first sin follow the whole race.

2. These penal consequences imply common responsibility. In proof of this Paul cites the fact that it has taken effect even where individual responsibility was not fully developed. Children die, even though not capable of personal sin.

This moral constitution which unites the race in responsibility for the consequences of acts of its members is not an unsupported dogmatic teaching of Scripture. Our moral and religious consciousness assents to its justice as soon as we consider its twofold range of action. We cannot claim its numerous blessings without submitting to its disadvantages; and a healthy religious spirit accepts it as a righteous and beneficent ordinance of God, which, in imposing more onerous because wider responsibility, by that very fact exalts us to a higher and richer moral life. All the highest and most godlike virtues of which we are capable arise out of the solidarity of moral constitution. Nor is this doctrine one of dogmatic teaching or religious faith alone. It enters into the whole experience of human life. In the family parents and children are bound up in this unity of moral life and responsibility. The village, the patriarchal tribe, the city state, the nation all afford conspicuous examples of its practical action. Jurisprudence recognises it in

our law of inheritance. We are therefore prepared by the facts of history and almost daily experience to accept Paul's statement of this law of solidarity in moral responsibility, the justice of which is recognised by the common consent of mankind.

The law has however its limitations, which must be carefully considered in its interpretation and application.

1. It must not be so interpreted or extended as to supersede or destroy individual responsibility. In fact it does not in itself constitute a distinct and separate kind of responsibility. Communal responsibility can exist only on the basis of individual responsibility. There must first of all be a responsible head, father or king, in whose individual responsibility the common responsibility centres. The doctrine is not one of a company responsibility in which no one is individually responsible. It is rather a mutual responsibility, in which each one is responsible not for himself alone but for all his fellows as well. Personal responsibility is thus not weakened or diminished, but vastly increased by this solidarity of moral constitution.

It recognizes, as any view of responsibility must, if true to fundamental principles, that there are degrees in this unity of moral life, extending from the head, who bears the weight of the whole, to the infant member, whose personal responsibility is yet to be. But in the corporate whole this infant is to be trained to take his

place and share. The unity of moral and social life in all its phases becomes a training school, in which individual responsibility is to be cultivated until it reaches its full measure of moral manhood.

2. United responsibility does not determine individual and eternal destinies. The final issue of each human life is "according to his works." "Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap." It is thus not so much an essential element of all moral responsibility as an order of God's moral government of man, under which our individual moral responsibility to God is both developed and exercised. Hence all common or united moral responsibility must be taken as subsidiary to, and limited by, the essential principles of individual responsibility. Such a passage as Ezek. xviii. limits the application of Ex. xx. 5, 6, as in fact that passage itself suggests the limitation. Individual responsibility is thus alone final and supreme. Hence, when we come to study probation, we shall find that it moves from the collective to the individual form of responsibility, and the common responsibility at last ends in that individual judgment in which, notwithstanding our mutual and moral relations, where "no man liveth to himself and no man dieth to himself," "everyone of us shall give account of himself to God."

CHAPTER II

PROBATION

PROBATION is a term closely related to responsibility, and has a similar extension of application to things human and divine. It differs from responsibility, in that it denotes not a permanent but a temporary relation. It is the first stage of the relation among moral beings in which ethical obligation is brought into exercise. Like responsibility, it implies authority on the one side, and subjection to that authority on the other. When applied to the relations of God and men, it is thus a part of religion as well as an ethical relation. It may be defined as the initial stage of responsibility, in which, by his own moral acts, a man acquires moral character—*i.e.* a record of moral good or evil, and the corresponding moral desert. It begins with the conditions of moral responsibility—viz., a moral nature, some knowledge of duty, and some ability for its discharge, and it ends with a judgment and its awards. It is a process which moves forward, not under natural, but under moral law. It is not a development proceeding unconsciously under the influence of environment, but a moral effort consciously striving for its end. This end is the

approval of the superior authority, the "Well done, good and faithful servant." It does, indeed, also promote development of moral power and perfection of moral nature, but this is collateral rather than primary, a purpose of God rather than of man. It is thus that process by which moral beings make moral goodness their own. Such moral goodness must be clearly distinguished from natural goodness. Natural goodness is of essence or being; moral goodness, of character or life. Natural goodness is that which is bestowed with the original gift of being, or arises out of its growth or development; moral goodness, or virtue, is that created by the act of will, and which gives effect to natural goodness in the face of contrary forces. The one is goodness by the constitution of nature, the other by the choice of will.

Probation is thus founded in moral nature, and implies its exercise. But it is only the beginning of such exercise. Moral action may begin with a probation, but it does not end with it. God is eternally and immutably good by act of will as well as by essence of being. His goodness is not bestowed, nor does it stand only in an immutable necessity of being, but it is the fountain-head of all natural goodness. It is goodness in and through conscious will, and hence truly moral goodness. But it had no beginning in act of will, and hence is not probational in its character. So in man, moral goodness may become what we sometimes call

a second nature, so confirmed that choice and will are no longer matters of effort. By this perfection moral goodness does not cease to be moral, but rises to the highest perfection of moral character, approaching nearer in our degree to the likeness of God Himself. The essence of moral goodness lies not in the opposition to be overcome, but in the willingness with which we act. Opposition may test and measure this goodwill, but its absence does not diminish or destroy it. And if it has grown so great that it overrides all opposition without effort, its moral worth is not thereby annulled, but rather proved to be all the greater.

But while probation thus belongs to moral beings, it belongs to such beings in their imperfection. It represents the incipient and imperfect stage of moral life, and is naturally terminated as that life advances towards perfection.

Probation has thus its negative, as well as its positive, side requiring definition.

1. On the positive side, as we have seen, it involves all the conditions of moral being, or the possibility of doing right.

2. On the negative side, it involves that imperfect stage of moral being in which wrong-doing is still a possibility.

3. On the positive side, it involves responsibility to recognized authority and law.

4. On the negative side, to meet its moral imperfection, this responsibility may be rendered effective by special tests, and rewards or penalties.

Probation is thus not a state of moral indifference. There may be a basis of natural goodness making right more easy. Or there may be evils in the nature opposed to the right. But if, in either case, these are such as to exclude the possibility of the alternate choice, then such a being is not in a state of probation. He is either good or bad, whether by nature or by choice, but he is no longer in that incipient stage of moral being implied in probation.

It is not necessary for us here to discuss possible forms of probation as applied to men or to other orders of moral beings. The business of the inductive theologian is with the forms of probation under which man stands related to God, and which have been clearly revealed both in the moral and religious history and consciousness of the race: it is his work to inquire

1. Whether men have stood, or do now stand, in a relation of moral probation before God?

2. What was originally the nature of this probational relation?

3. What have been its outcome and changes, if any?

The answer to these questions is an answer of facts, manifest in human consciousness or in the records of history.

Human Probation a Fact.

The religious consciousness of humanity bears universal testimony to the fact that man stands in a probational relation before God. The belief

in a judgment after death, and awards of reward or penalty as the result of such judgment, has entered into all developed religions known in human history; and these both involve and are part of a probational system. We can trace this belief back far beyond the time of Moses into the earliest historic traditions, and even prehistoric myths, of the race. The earliest records of Egyptians, Babylonians, Aryans and Semites all give evidence of such belief. Turning to the Scriptures, as pre-eminently the record of Divine Revelation, we find, first of all, an original probation of man at the very foundation of his moral history, with certain clearly stated conditions and results.

Again, we find a gradually unfolding present probation under the world's Redeemer, with conditions revealed from time to time with the world's moral progress, and results to be reached at a final day of judgment. This faith enters into the very essence of the religion of the Hebrew people, and is largely extended and perfected by the teaching of Christ and His Apostles. It is thus not a temporary phase or stage of religious belief, but one of its fundamental and abiding elements, to which Scripture and history, reason and conscience, are united in testimony.

The doctrine as presented in the New Testament as a part of the Christian religion includes a primitive probation of the first human beings, and in them of the race, a progressive probation of a

sinful race in various temporary forms and measures of light and opportunity, together with the central probation of a chosen people, and finally a universal probational dispensation for the world's salvation in Christ.

The doctrine of probation thus not only unites religion with ethics in a general providential government of men by God, but in its historic outcome leads us to all other elements of the Christian religion, which in its entire belief as to the relations of man to God proceeds upon the basis of the unity of ethics with religion. Henceforth our studies will thus be more than ever limited to the Christian system and Scriptures.

The Primitive Probation.

In the moral history of the race as presented in Scripture probational test and law appear in three forms:

1. Representative or symbolic acts, prescribed as of Divine authority, and embodying or signifying important elements of moral and religious duty. Even in the New Testament we have two such probational acts prescribed as badges of the Christian profession, Baptism and the Lord's Supper. Under the Mosaic law a large use was made of this form of probational discipline.

2. Definite concrete acts of moral and religious obligation, founded, not simply on authority, but upon moral and religious reasons clearly apprehended, *e.g.* the Ten Commandments.

3. General principles, the application in concrete act being left to the individual moral judgment and conscience, *e.g.* the Christian law of love.

These several forms of probational law correspond to stages of moral development, and belong respectively to the infancy, the advancing growth, and the moral maturity of the race. They are in the same way successively applicable to each individual. The child under authority may conscientiously observe forms of moral and religious life before it understands reasons. The growing youth may understand the moral reasonableness of particular duties before he is able to apply general principles to all new circumstances of life for himself. So in the world's history, prescribed forms or even symbolic acts play a most important part in moral life, even to-day calling out and awakening conscience. The order is, first, a simple prescribed act; next, a definite moral commandment; finally, the universal principle of "faith working by love."

The Biblical account of the original probation of the race is contained in the second creation document of Genesis, chapters ii. and iii. That this document is very ancient, and that in various forms it substantially existed among various ancient people is now well known. How it originated we do not know. We may not be certain as to its literary form or character. It may be history, it may be allegory; we are here concerned with it only as embodying a view of

the moral and religious beginnings of the race held by the religious faith of men from very early times, embodied in the Hebrew Scriptures, and accepted by Paul, if not by Christ Himself, and incorporated by Him into the Christian presentation of man's moral relations to God. Its literary form and construction are subordinate; we are concerned with its religious teaching.

1. It places the original probation of man in the observance of a simple symbolic ordinance. "Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat, but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil thou shalt not eat of it; for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die." There is indeed reference also in the account to another tree, the tree of life, which seems to represent the reception from God of the gift of life, but access to this tree is also conditional on the previous probational law. There appears thus a remarkable parallel between these two trees of the primitive document and the probational ordinances first of the Mosaic and then of the Christian dispensation. The tree of knowledge, circumcision, baptism, all set forth the ethical side of relation to God—separation from sin. The tree of life, the passover and the Lord's Supper, represent the religious side—the gift of life from Him.

It may be objected that we are assuming here that the account in Genesis is literal history. This is not necessary, though we are by no means prepared to admit that it has not a good historical

foundation. But even if we take it as an allegorical representation of the primitive ethical development of the race, we must admit that it sets forth these and other ethical facts as belonging to that development, and it is the facts with which, following St. Paul, we have to deal. These facts may be summarised as follows: That the moral development and primitive probation date back to the beginning of the race; that this probation and development were both effected through the physical, things visible leading to and expressing the spiritual; that its outcome at the beginning of the race was a universal fall into sin; and that this fall affected not the individual alone, but through him the race. Are such facts reasonable in view of what we know of the moral nature of man?

1. The employment of a symbolic ordinance appealing to the outward senses as the test of probation is fitted to the moral infancy of the race. It is the awakening of conscience, as from the innocence of childhood, to the simplest and most elementary form of moral obligation which is here set forth. Man is thus permitted to build from the very foundation the structure of moral character. God does nothing for him which he can do for himself. Definite moral laws and universal moral principles will all come to him in due time as the reward of probational fidelity and experience; or, failing that, as the gift of a Divine remedial provision working along the same lines of moral law. Any other constitution would

have deprived man of something of the glory of moral being; and the possibility, or even the certainty, that through sin some would ultimately fail would not justify God in depriving His creatures of this glory.

The subjective conditions of the primitive probation are thus those of a child, and so, our Lord teaches, must the new probation, we might even say all probation, begin. "Except ye be converted and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the Kingdom of Heaven."

2. The account in Genesis presents also the objective conditions or environment of the primitive probation as embracing temptation as one of its elements. Temptation is an appeal from without to induce us to do wrong. In this case it implies a higher and a lower self, and that virtue lies in the assertion of the higher self as against the lower or as governing it. The law or test of probation gives a concrete form to this assertion. When it says, "Thou shalt not eat," it requires that appetite be subordinate to Divine authority. But the temptation lies in the calling up, the incitement of the lower nature by an active agent from without represented in this case by the serpent. If it be asked, is this reasonable? is it consistent with Divine justice and goodness that such temptation should be permitted to intervene in the primitive probation of an infant race? the answer may be gained from Paul's statement. Under a righteous administration of probational conditions temptation is limited. "There hath

no temptation taken you but such as is common to man; but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it." Temptation may be needful for the proper development through probation of our moral nature, and hence is assigned to man as a moral agent as his "common" lot, but always in the justice of God reasonably limited to his ability. The moral necessity for temptation is set forth by Peter; "Though now for a little while, if need be, ye have been put to grief by manifold temptations, that the proof of your faith, being more precious than of gold that perisheth though it be proved with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the revelation of Jesus Christ." So also James i. 2-4. Temptation endured is a helper to moral and religious perfection. It is therefore not inconsistent with either God's justice or goodness.

3. The process and result of the primitive probation are also set forth in Genesis, and are again in accord with universal human experience and with moral and rational principles. The narrative is wonderfully picturesque and has been variously interpreted, but no form of interpretation can eliminate the principles of moral and religious truth which it contains. It corresponds to the process of temptation, sin, and fall in every individual man. It gives us:—

(*a*) The presentation or suggestion from with-

out of the forbidden act as an object of natural desire.

(*b*) It does this in the face of the conscious knowledge of the prohibition, thus converting innocent natural desire into temptation to sin. So Rom. vii. 9, "When the commandment came, sin revived (woke into life), and I died."

(*c*) It presents the suggestion of unbelief or disbelief of the truth, rectitude or goodness of God in making the prohibition.

(*d*) This is followed by an inward yielding to the suggestion, accepting the word of the tempter before that of God.

(*e*) Next comes the act which outwardly breaks the commandment.

(*f*) Next follows the subjective judgment of conscience, a sense of moral degradation and guilty fear.

(*g*) Finally the probation is judged, the sentence is pronounced and the penalty enforced.

In the process as thus set forth there are four stages:—

1. Simple temptation. There appear in consciousness the suggestion of the sinful act and the light of the command. This does not involve any sin.

2. Reasoning with temptation. God's law is reasonable, holy, just and good. But the reasoning process gives opportunity for growing desire, and hence danger.

3. Hesitation and doubt. Uncertainty of faith

and of will. This is the beginning of all sin. (Rom. xiv. 23; John iii. 18.)

4. The completion of the transgression in the outward act (James i. 15). Even at the third step there is possibility of return, but at the fourth the final record is made, and that which is done cannot be undone.

The account of the primitive probation given in Genesis is thus a perfectly rational one, and, whether construed literally or allegorically, it contains the elements of ethical truth which must of necessity have entered into man's moral history.

The same may be said of the relation of sin to physical death. This too has entered into the universal moral and religious conscience of the race, and however brought about by physical law, is thus truly united to the higher moral law as a part of God's moral order for man. The extension of the results of the primitive probation to the whole race, and the moral order under which it takes place will be considered under the next chapter.

CHAPTER III

SIN

If the view which we have presented of the nature of moral responsibility as our relation to God, and of probation as a divine method or order for the exercise of that relation be correct, then sin as the outcome of probation is a matter which belongs to the domain of religion as well as of ethics. And so the universal religious consciousness of humanity has testified. Men are not only convicted of their sin in their own conscience as a wrong act, but they also on its account tremble before God that it is offensive in His sight, a transgression of His law to be rewarded by His just penalties. In the lower stages of human development this religious consciousness of sin is even more prominent than the purely ethical; though we think the two are never entirely separated, as both are founded in ultimate elements of our spiritual being as well as in eternal realities for which that being was fitly created.

Sin has thus in its nature two aspects; on the one side it affects our religious faith and emotions as a violation of God's law; and on the other, it affects our conscience or moral nature as moral

evil, badness, or wrong. In the second aspect, we judge of it as an act in its moral nature, as we might judge of a thing as ugly or beautiful; in the first we carry the act up into its relation to God and His holy law. In its full definition sin is:

1. Transgression of God's law and amenability to the penalty of that transgression. This is its objective side, 1 John iii. 4, "Sin is lawlessness," *i.e.* the violation of law. And Rom. v. 13, "Sin is not imputed when there is no law."

2. That which arises out of the moral nature of that transgression, viz., guilt. This includes:

(*a*) The inherent badness or evil of the act as opposed to the eternal, immutable, and perfect right and good.

(*b*) Desert of, and hence righteous liability to the penal consequences, whether imposed by a positive law or inherent in the very nature of the sin, making it its own punishment.

(*c*) The inward response of conscience to this judgment acknowledging the act as my act, its evil as my sin, and its liability to penalty as my guilt.

The sense of sin as fully developed in our consciousness thus plainly indicates that it is not an abstract quality of action in its moral nature, but that its relation to God and to religion is as definitely affirmed within us as its wrong. These several aspects of sin appear very clearly in the terms used in the Old Testament to denote sin. Probably no language is richer than the Hebrew

in this respect, indicating the very full development of the moral and religious consciousness of this people. It is:

1. *Avon*—a twisting or perverting, wrong perverting right.
2. *Raa*—a breaking or destroying.
3. *Sheker*—a weaving, *i.e.* falsehood, fiction.
4. *Aven*—breath, emptiness.
5. *Shagag*—wandering, error.
6. *Pesha*—rebellion against authority.
7. *Rasha*—lawlessness.
8. *Asham*—a thing condemned, under penalty.
9. *Amal*—toil, misery, suffering.
10. *Chattath*—a missing of the mark; *i.e.* the true end or reward of life.

A large number of these expressive terms are paralleled in the New Testament, and especially by St Paul in his terrible indictment of human sin in the first chapter of the Epistle to the Romans. A few of these will show us how completely the ethical conceptions of the Old Testament have been transferred to the New, where they are brought out even more fully in the clear logical definition of the Greek language. Thus ἀδικια expresses the injustice of sin, ἀσεβεια its godlessness, πονηρια and κακια its badness, ἀτιμια its shamefulness, ἁμαρτια its missing of the true way of life, ἀνομια its lawlessness, ἀσυνετος its folly, and several terms its utter selfishness. Of these the generic term for sin is ἁμαρτια. It includes both the moral and the religious aspect. It implies not only a right, but a right order or

way of life ordained of God, and sin is departure from this. It is thus in St Paul almost synonymous with ἀνομια in St John, which he uses once as a comprehensive definition of sin. The νομος or law expressed the true, the right relation of things. This relation is founded by God as the Author of the universe, and springs from the perfection of His Being. It finds expression for men in His Word, and is His holy will. Sin breaks this, contradicts it. It is wrong relation.

First of all, in its commission it reverses the moral law within. By that law all the lower self, all motives which spring from the senses, the appetites and selfish desires, should be subject to the control of reason and conscience. But sin overthrows this law, since in its commission we yield to the lower nature, influenced from without, in opposition to conscience, reason, and religious faith.

Again, sin as a completed act places me in a wrong relation to God, or to my fellow-beings, or to both. The moral law within which requires the supremacy of conscience, is made by God as the counterpart of the moral law without which prescribes and enforces my right relation to all other beings. A violation of the moral law within, coming forth as an objective act, puts me out of right relations to the universe. It leaves me in a permanent state of wrong. To this conscience bears its most emphatic testimony, and history, as interpreted by religious faith in all the ages, confirms its assertion. The hereafter of the perfect

man is peace, but the hereafter of the wicked shall be cut off.

Sin is thus very far from being a mere negation, a failure to reach a good. It is not the mere absence of right relation, it is positive wrong relation. It is thus a reality, and as such a new thing as well as a wrong thing, a thing not made by God, but our own doing—we have done the positive wrong. It does indeed originate in the failure to assert our true selves, our higher nature in the direction of our life, but that very failure sets loose lower forces which land us in the positive wrong. These forces are not in themselves evil. They have their right function as servants. In the lower orders of creation they may guide and rule the life to its true ends. But man's true life is a higher life, a life of moral right and religious harmony with God. To him the lower life, uncontrolled by the moral and religious, is a wrong life, a transgression of moral law. Into such a life he passes by a fall from his true relations and prerogatives as a moral being. Conscience and religious faith abdicate the supremacy which belong to them. The sin is thus in the spirit and not in the flesh. Only a moral being can commit sin. These considerations exclude every view which makes sin a necessary result of our nature or circumstances. It is, as our conscience and religious nature both assert, our act originating from our inmost self, our perversion of God's good.

The Results of Sin.

We come now to consider sin in its effects, first upon the individual sinner and then upon the race. We have already seen that in its moral badness sin is guilt, *i.e.* desert of penalty. Penalty is deserved under moral law, and it may be inflicted by special just provisions of a moral government. But, as we have already found natural law subsidiary to moral law, and in God's government, He, as the Author of both natural and moral law, may make sin its own penalty in its natural consequences or results. The earlier theologians, interpreting the language of Scripture literally, were disposed to make the penalty of sin an infliction *ab extra* after the analogy of human government. Later views are disposed to fall back upon natural law as the method of the penalty of sin. In either view the order is of God and according to the perfection of his moral nature.

The immediate subjective result of sin is, from the moral side, loss of the sense of right accompanied by remorse of conscience. The corresponding result on the religious side is loss of confidence toward God, which becomes positive fear, the dread of deserved penalty. The two taken together constitute a degradation of the entire moral being. The confidence of our moral nature, our sense of rectitude with God and man, the strength of holy boldness, the consciousness of right relation is gone, or rather is replaced by a consciousness of wrong and guilt. Our very glory

has become our shame, our strength is now our weakness, and the courage of the upright has become the terror of the guilty; our entire spiritual being feels the wound of sin.

But these results of sin are not only immediate and sensible, but also permanent and affecting the very constitution of our moral being. By even a single act of sin, the power of conscience and religious motive which is the basis of human freedom and of our power to do right as moral beings, is greatly weakened if not entirely destroyed. The moral judgment is darkened and confused; the impulse of fear which takes the place of the sense of righteous obligation is devoid of its spiritual strength as well as of its dignity; and the true moral power of freedom of will is gone. At the same time all the passions whether animal or social which relate us to the world about us and naturally to our fellow men, and which were ordered of God to be governed and guided by reason, conscience and loving obedience to God, assume abnormal control and speedily become inordinate in their power. These are now our masters and our life is a real bondage to their service.

The strength of the will which concentrates the power of our being in action is in like manner perverted. Its energy is expended in the gratification of the passions, and its power to resist or overcome its fellows in the struggle for existence which ensues in this sinful life takes the place of the Divine freedom in the strength of which

it once did right. The whole life thus becomes centred in a lower form of being. We cannot call it animal, though it is largely that, for it is separated from the mere animal by a higher intelligence, as well as by many forms of social affections which distinguish us as human beings. But the centre of life, that which occupies the thoughts and commands the energies, is no longer God, right, truth, beauty, goodness, but self, sense, pride, ambition, anger, revenge, and such like. The picture given by Paul in the first of Romans is not one whit too dark to describe the moral condition into which sin leads humanity, both the individual and the race. It may be expressed in one word, a moral ruin.

Depravity

is the word employed in theology to designate this irreligious and immoral condition, this perversion of a godlike nature within and this entire prostitution of life into which sin leads. Depravity is not a mere return to an animal or brute life. The fierce rage of the lion, the stealthy hunt of the tiger, the cunning of the fox are all mere instincts. They do not imply the setting aside of right, of truth, of goodness, the choice of evil for good. Only a moral being can be depraved. To prove then that the human race or the individual man is depraved, it is not sufficient to show that they are subject to animal passions. There must be evidence of the higher nature and

of the possibility of the higher life. Of the beastliness, the ferocity and the other evil passions of humanity there is alas no lack of evidence. Paul needed only to describe that which lay all about him in the Roman world to exhibit this in its utter vileness. Was this vileness of the Roman world only a stage in the moral development of humanity towards higher things? Is the life of China to-day only an example of imperfect or arrested moral development? Can this be said even of the inhabitants of Africa or Polynesia or the aborigines of America? We think not. Paul found even in Rome the wrecks of better things, a law written in men's hearts, here and there works of moral law which prove them moral beings. It is because that they knew God, and knew the ordinances of right and Divine judgment against sin that he adjudged them wicked and not merely unfortunate. The evil state of humanity is thus proved to be a real depravity and not a low stage of moral development.

What thus appears from the observation of humanity in various ages and countries, is corroborated even by ancient myth. In almost every land there are traditions or fictitious ideals of a golden age in the past, and hopes of a better life in the future, proving that Paul was not mistaken in his judgment of humanity as sinning against light. But the strongest evidence of depravity comes from each man's own consciousness. This has never been more perfectly described than again by Paul in the seventh of Romans, ending

in that terrible cry of a heart struggling against its own corruption and longing for better things. "O wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me out of the body of this death?" Nor was this moral struggle with an evil self the work of sin, the experience of Paul alone. Every good man has felt the same, and the common verdict of moral and religious consciousness is that human depravity as the outcome of sin is universal. Such is Paul's conclusion as expressed in the third of Romans, not only that "all have sinned and come short of the glory of God," but that "all are under sin," and the words which he quotes, not to prove but to express this, describe depravity as well as acts of sin. It is thus the common faith of Christianity that sin and depravity are universal in the human race. There may be very wide diversity of opinion as to the extent of this depravity, and the use or definition of the word total in this relation; but only a very small minority refuse to admit the fact. Even with these it is a question of theory as to the moral condition of infancy rather than of fact in their own moral and religious consciousness. We think every man who with Paul has passed up into the higher Christian consciousness of redemption from sin will with Paul admit the fact not only of his personal sin and guilt but of his depravity. Certainly the fact of the universality of depravity as well as of sin is most clearly recognised in the New Testament as well as in the Old, and the entire system of Christian re-

demption is based upon it. Granted that sin appeared at the very foundation of the race, and as the result of its primitive probation, how came sin and its most terrible result, depravity, to be thus universal?

Sin in the Race.

We have already referred to the solidarity or unity of the race in moral responsibility. The foundation of that solidarity lies in the relation of parents and children and the constitution of the family. The physical law associated with it, and through which the moral principle takes effect, is the law of heredity. But the moral law of solidarity has a much wider range than this physical law of heredity. In the first place the family, as the fundamental moral and social group of human beings, extends into tribes, cities, nations, and other forms of united life. Again in these, purely moral forces arise, binding individuals together in a common life. Example, social affection, education, common interests, emulation, conflict of interests, and many other forms of moral force spring into existence, by which men influence each other, become involved in common courses of action, and fashion each other's lives and character. The world of humanity into which each new life comes becomes thus to that life a moral environment, exerting upon it forces almost irresistible in their energy. If therefore at the origin of the human race sin entered, its perpetuation

and universal extension must follow under the influence of natural law and of social and moral forces. So obvious is this result in the experience of mankind that we stand aghast in its presence, and ask ourselves, can any moral responsibility be possible under such circumstances, and can the being who created such a world be wise and good? The wisdom and goodness of the constitution shines out in its true moral glory as soon as we pause to consider its influence and power for good. Out of this constitution comes the possibility of all our highest virtues. Mother's love, father's toil, brotherly care, the patriot's self-sacrifice, the martyr's giving of his life, all the highest, noblest, most beautiful things in our moral life spring out of this constitution, and would not be possible apart from it. A still more complete vindication will appear when we come to find that it renders possible the redemption even of a world fallen into all the depths of this sin and depravity.

But apart from these considerations each individual conscience if carefully questioned acknowledges not only personal responsibility but also a common responsibility as one of a family, a tribe, or a nation; and to the mind sufficiently enlightened to take in his relation to the whole race, this sense of responsibility extends to all. We are so constituted that we would not if we could sever ourselves from this solidarity of humanity; our deepest nature accepts even the moral results of living and dying as one with our race. Even

when we hold ourselves personally blameless we yet accept as righteous the penal consequences which follow from the common sin. Thus a whole nation involved in war by an unwise act of its government acknowledges and accepts the consequences as justly falling upon all, even though they may have not been personally consenting parties, or may have even protested against it. By their political relationship they are morally one with the wrongdoers, and must with them share the consequences. This principle as we have already seen is clearly recognised and asserted in Scripture. It is even more prominent in the Old Testament than in the New. In fact this solidarity of the race belongs to the earlier stage of its development. The moral progress of humanity is from the mass to the individual. Ancient political life scarcely recognised such a thing as individual rights and liberty. The state, the common unity, was everything, the individual nothing. In our day, on the other hand, and especially within the last century, individualism has so asserted itself that we almost forget that we have not yet entirely escaped from the law of solidarity, and that under that law every man is still born into the world, and that under it alone can he be properly trained and prepared for the exercise of a full individual responsibility.

Terrible therefore as are the results of this universal extension of sin and depravity to the whole race under this law of moral solidarity and

natural heredity, yet when fully considered they must approve themselves as right and just. They are the fitting outcome of sin, exhibiting in full light its evil and wrong, that as Paul says sin "might be shown to be sin," and "through the commandment might become exceeding sinful." The awful severity of the Divine justice in thus punishing sin with its own dire moral consequences, in so weaving justice into the very nature of things, that sin must by the very law of all being move onward to perdition, is something before which sinful humanity must surely tremble. In our moral weakness we would fain seek some easier way of life. But we must ever bear in mind that any lowering of this severe standard of moral justice as against sin involves in the very nature of things a corresponding dimness of the moral glory of that Divine image in which God made us men.

CHAPTER IV

DEATH

"SIN when it is full-grown bringeth forth death," says St James. Paul goes even further and says, "Through one man sin entered into the world and death through sin," and again "In Adam all die." The relation of death to human sin thus becomes an important topic of theology.

The older theology asserted a threefold death, natural or the separation of the soul from the body, spiritual or the separation of the soul from God, and eternal or the separation of soul and body from God for ever. That the term death is used in Scripture in the second and third senses is we think true, at least in the New Testament. But such use is clearly tropical, and the primary and most general use of the term is of natural or physical death. It is, we think, in this primary sense that death is set forth by Paul in Rom. v. as the result of sin, as appears from verse 14. The two tropical significations of death express most important religious truths, one of which we have just considered under the results of sin; and the other of which must be fully considered hereafter. Our present concern is with the question, Is physical death to the human race the penalty or result of sin?

That death is the natural termination of

animal life is obvious. Our modern biological studies have emphasized rather than diminished the force of this fact, and have also so emphasized the physical side of human nature as to make death appear to be quite as natural to men as to the other members of the animal creation. Some difficulty thus without doubt arises as to the moral relation of physical death to sin? On the other hand the moral and religious faith of humanity has from the earliest times attached death to sin as its penalty or result. The oldest religions, heathen religions, religions of the most barbarous tribes and of the most civilized nations unite with the Hebrew faith and Christianity in this belief. Correspondent to this is the belief in the exemption of the pre-eminently good from death at various times in the world's history. Enoch and Elijah are the conspicuous Old Testament examples of this. That this is the faith of Christianity there can be no question. Apart from any interpretation of the third of Genesis and of other particular passages, it so enters into the entire Christian view of man's moral relations to the unseen world and to the future, and also of the atoning work of Christ, that to deny this would be to overthrow most important elements of the Christian faith. The question is thus of no small importance: Is this religious faith founded in substantial fact? and is it in harmony with the reason of the case?

In answer to this question we cannot think

it satisfactory to say that, while death is the outcome of a natural law common to man with the lower animals, to man it serves the purpose of a penalty inasmuch as his conscience associates it with his sin. To constitute it truly the penalty of sin, we think it necessary to show that, apart from sin, man as a spiritual being would not have died, and this is, we think, the true content of religious faith. It is no objection to a penalty that it takes place by natural law; it is only needful to show that the moral law controls the natural law bringing it in to do its work under the proper moral conditions. The task thus set before us is one of no little difficulty inasmuch as the evidence of direct fact is excluded. We know of no man without sin, and we know nothing of the race as a race before sin on which to found an observation of facts as to the operation of the natural law of death. The whole testimony of Scripture is a testimony of religious faith. The first beginning of that faith is not a matter of definite record apart from a purely literal interpretation of the third of Genesis, and even then we are thrown back upon authority rather than upon fact and the reason of the case. On the other hand the persistence of this belief through all ages and its extension to all people seems presumptive evidence that it is founded not in a blind religious faith, but in a faith called out by facts of universal experience. For such facts we must therefore seek.

Our thoughts are first of all directed to a class of facts which, perhaps, did not originate this belief of the relation of sin to death, but which has doubtless had much to do with its perpetuation and extension among men. It is a fact of universal experience that sin shortens human life, and that the premature death of the great majority of the race is brought about directly and obviously by their own sins, the sins of their parents, or the sinful passions either of individuals or bodies of men, in origination of private quarrels or public war. This experience is frequently referred to in the Psalms and Proverbs, so that it was almost an aphorism that "bloody and deceitful men shall not live out half their days," and that "the wicked shall be cut off from the land," and "the seed of the wicked shall be cut off." Thus, from very early times there was a broad induction from human experience, which laid the foundation of a religious faith which connected righteousness with "length of days," and sin with death. This same faith, found in sudden death, in calamitous death, in pestilence and destructive diseases, and other natural phenomena, and even in the hand of warlike enemies, evidence of the anger of God against sin. One of the most ancient traditions of the race, preserved in all south-western Asia and the adjacent parts of Europe, and probably re-appearing even in America, is of the Deluge as a Divine judgment of death against the race for abounding sin This moral judgment appears not in the Biblical

form of the tradition alone, but in the polytheistic Babylonian form as well. The faith which regards death as the extreme penalty of sin is thus bound up with the faith in a Divine providence, which regulates all the affairs of men on the principles of a moral government.

Our modern biological science rather confirms than otherwise this ancient religious belief. While it may remove the idea that these things are an immediate and arbitrary infliction of Divine judgment, and may serve to reduce them all under the domain of general law, it only makes more clear the relation of that law to moral causes, so that the old aphorism "The labour of the righteous tendeth to life" is most completely vindicated by modern science. But something more than these facts, important and suggestive though they may be, is needed as the foundation of the religious faith that death is the universal penalty of universal sin. This is, we think, to be found in the moral and religious experience associated with death itself. Death in all ages has been to men the king of terrors. Stout hearts may brave his approach, or may even seek release through him from other more dreaded evils; philosophy may strive to fortify the mind against his inevitable approach; but do what we will, the mind of man shrinks back from death, and would if it could prevent or postpone its coming. And with its coming comes the clearer consciousness of the sins and errors of life. The nearer approach of death gives clearness to the

moral judgment and reinforces the voice of conscience, so that the hour of death becomes almost in itself a day of judgment of the whole past life. Sin in this experience becomes most really the sting of death. It is useless to say that these terrors are supernatural, and hence fictitious and superstitious. They are the direct result of our moral nature, the voice of conscience itself, its remorse over sin. If we admit the validity of conscience in life, we cannot deny its warning premonitions in the hour and article of death.

It is through this experience that death has become to each individual man the final arraignment before God for the sin of his life, and it is easy to understand how in this way it becomes to both the moral and the religious sense the universal and extreme penalty of human sin. The account in the third of Genesis may be the embodiment of this faith in allegorical form; or, as we are inclined to believe, it may be more, a historical tradition carrying this faith back to the earliest appearance of moral convictions, of sin and of death in the experience of the race, an experience at once so distinct in its awful reality of moral and physical pain, and so breaking in upon the conscious joy of life, that its remembrance was perpetuated to all generations; especially as to every succeeding generation and individual, the experience was repeated. The experience of universal sin, of universal conscious judgment of sin, and of universal death,

became to both conscience and religious faith the foundation facts for this religious belief.

The sole scientific objection to the validity of this belief is the presumption that, apart from sin, the natural law of decay and death which governs all animal life would, in any case, have obtained in the life of man. That it has so obtained is certainly true. But it has obtained side by side with the universal fact of sin. Does it so prevail in virtue solely of the natural law? or is the natural law here instrumental and conditional on the moral law? To prove the first alternate would be, we think, scientifically impossible. It would demand an experiment which, in a sinful race, cannot now be made. On the other hand, the reasonableness of the second alternate is seemingly at least apparent.

If sin be a descent to the lower and merely animal life, as well as the perversion and overthrow of the higher life, then it is only reasonable to suppose that, as its result, the law of the lower life, the exhaustion of the vital forces through their exclusive use, should once more obtain, and thus the moral law becomes the higher condition of the physical. To substantiate this, certainly the experience of all human life comes in, that violation of moral law now hastens the operation of the natural law by which death is wrought. It is not, therefore, either unreasonable or unscientific to regard it as conditioning that law from the beginning in regard to moral beings.

On the other hand we have seen that even in

this imperfect moral life, and among a race the physical constitution of which has universally felt the effects of sin, and in an environment which in countless ways works in the same direction, "the labour of the righteous tendeth to life." It is not an exhaustion, but rather an increase of the vital forces. Is it then unreasonable to believe that a perfect moral life, and a perfect environment of that life, may have led to physical immortality? Or is it unreasonable to hope that, in a future age, a perfect spiritual restoration may be accompanied by the restoration, even to humanity, of physical immortality? It is very true that these considerations fall short of scientific demonstration; but we are building theology on religious faith; not on scientific or philosophical demonstration. It is "the evidence of things not seen," and "the substance of things hoped for" which forms the true foundation of our certainty or assurance here. We have only to show that this assurance is neither unreasonable nor unscientific. It is we grant beyond the power of science or reason to give us this faith in immortality founded on spiritual perfection. It may be even difficult for science to accept it; she may affirm that from her standpoint of the observation of purely physical forces, it is improbable that moral or spiritual forces could hold under conditions so universal a biological law. But neither science nor reason can affirm that such is not the fact; nor can they say that it is impossible, nor can they deny that there are both facts and scientific considerations looking in

this direction and bringing it at least within the limits of the possible and so of the reasonable.

These considerations might be vastly increased in force, nay raised almost to the point of rational certainty, were we to resort to arguments based on the wisdom, goodness and justice of God. But as the foundations of all these must be religious faith and moral conviction, we may let the matter rest on the moral and religious convictions of the race, and pre-eminently on those Divinely-guided and perfected convictions which are set before us in the Word of God. Here certainly death entered the world of men by sin at the beginning, and to all the ages, " the wages of sin is death."

CHAPTER V

THE END OF SIN

IF our studies thus far of the nature of sin are correct, the results of sin are a part of its very nature, so that, as one has profoundly said, God punishes sin by sin; sin is its own penalty. The man who sins against the Holy Spirit "hath never forgiveness, but is in danger of eternal sin." Is then, sin, with all its varied forms of evil, eternal? This is the most terribly painful question which the mind of man can approach.

1. The sinful act once done cannot be undone. It has introduced a new thing, a wrong, into God's universe. This wrong necessitates a new, a defensive position on the part of every moral being in the universe. That position is justice. Justice is the right relation of God and of all moral beings toward sin, a relation of separation from it, and of recognition that its penalty, which in the Divine order is self-inflicted, is just. For this relation moral judgment knows no substitution. The relation is right, and is the only right, and under its law the sin as an eternal fact, must abide. Justice must represent an unchangeable attitude of the Divine nature; it is the final and immutable right relation toward sin.

And this justice is perfect. It is absolutely right; it satisfies. It seeks for no end beyond itself. It yields its claims to no other demand; it cannot do so. If God be God, and right be right, justice must abide, and so far as conscience and reason can tell us, this is the end. By the course of justice, God is in right relation toward the sin, and the universe is in right relation toward it as well as toward God. Even the sinner himself feels that under the just results of his sin, he stands in the only right relation as a sinner toward all beings and all things. The law of justice thus counteracts sin by establishing a new harmony of moral relations. Sin is rightly placed under justice, and this is its first conceivable end, and the only end presented by purely moral intuition.

2. In contrast to this stern verdict of moral judgment, the religious faith of all the ages has maintained the hope of the forgiveness of sin. This hope we find expressed in the remotest times, and in even the feeblest and darkest forms of religious faith. It has perhaps more than any other single element entered into the development of religious acts of service toward God; and, according as these acts have been guided by true or false ideas of how forgiveness may be secured, it has elevated or degraded religious life. Is the forgiveness of sin a righteous possibility? Can it be made consistent with eternal and immutable justice? The answer to this question can only be given as we come next to study the redemption that is in Christ Jesus as the very centre

and substance of the Christian religion. At present we are concerned only with those preliminary considerations which lie in the facts of our moral nature.

We have already seen that sin lies (1) in act, (2) in guilt, (3) in consequent ruin of our moral being.

1. The act is my own, created by my own choice, it is of and from myself alone. It is not even the natural outcome of the powers which God has given me. I have created it only by ignoring or degrading those powers. The act cannot be assigned to another. I cannot repudiate it, or assign it to another. My own consciousness must be eternal witness that it is mine. There is thus in my moral nature no release or seeming possibility of release from my relation to the act of sin.

2. The guilt, the blameworthiness of the act is also mine. This belongs to the paternity of the act, and it cannot in the nature of things be transferred. Others may share its consequences, even where it was in no sense their personal act, but they cannot share its blame. The *culpa*, to borrow the expressive old Latin word, is mine alone, from the very fact that it is my act.

3. There remains of the sin only its effect, first toward God and all holy beings, and then within myself.

Can my relation to God be changed? Can a just God deal with the guilty sinner other than in justice? To this again my moral nature has

but one answer, No. Religious faith alone clings to the hope of forgiveness. Can God's holy creatures stand in any other relation to me, a guilty sinner, than that prescribed by the right of moral law? Again my moral nature has but one answer, and that is, No.

Nor is there any remedial hope in the results of sin upon my own moral nature. Those results are all and only destructive. They tend only to perpetuate sin, in the terribly expressive words of Scripture to eternal sin. Conscience and faith, God's vicegerents within deposed from the throne, self, passion, and appetite bearing sway, there is within myself no healing power, no possibility of restoration; I can only cry with Paul, "O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me out of this body of death?"

There remains another conceivable end of sin, *i.e.* the cessation of being of the sinner, and in this the consummation of justice against the sinner. But this is an end which religious faith has never anticipated, and which philosophy has no power to affirm. Such cessation must be either the act of God or the result of sin. The act of God we could know only through revelation to religious faith, and of such revelation or faith we have no trace either in Scripture or in outside religious faith. Nor does the overthrow of our moral nature by sin afford ground for such a doctrine. That overthrow is a change of relation, not of essential being. The spirit in its moral, religious, and rational attributes is still

there, but perverted against God, against itself, against the universe of beings in which it still exists, though as an outcast, but in this perverted existence there is no prophecy of annihilation but only of eternal pain. There thus lies in our moral nature and in ourselves no hope but that sin shall eternally abide under Divine justice, and with it the sinner in his sin.

The Door of Hope.

In one only aspect of our moral constitution which we have not yet examined does there lie a door of hope of salvation from sin, and the persistent, and we had almost said universal, faith of humanity in the possibility of salvation leads us to turn to that door with strong confidence. In some way or other this faith must be justified, and in some direction it must have a foundation in facts, both of human nature and of history. What are these facts?

They belong to that constitution of our moral nature which involves us in a solidarity of moral responsibility, and which forms the moral basis of the natural law of heredity. We have already seen the result of this constitution in the history and development of sin in the race. Following from this constitution the penal consequences of the sin of the first parents have reached out to the whole race, and its results have been a condition of universal sin both in act and nature.

But if under this constitution one moral head

could curse the race with universal penal consequences and a fallen nature, under the same constitution another moral head may bless the race and lift it back to goodness and right. The full development of this principle we must leave till we come to study the Christian faith in the work of Christ for the world's redemption from sin. Just now we need only say that the world's moral history is full of illustrations of the saving power of this principle, and the whole history of the world's faith in the forgiveness of sin is based upon its application in symbolic form if not directly. The very idea that one may suffer for another's sin, and that such suffering is meritorious and avails as an atonement before God is a part of the oldest religious faith of the race, and grows directly out of this sense of moral unity before God. The hope of redemption has thus been given not to a chosen people alone, but to the race, and even the darkest and most miserable of sin-cursed humanity have not lived in utter despair. And this faith has been kept alive throughout the ages, as patriots have died to save their country, martyrs to preserve the truth to their fellow-men, heroes to rescue the perishing, and as others have toiled and suffered, not for self, but to bless their kind.

The hope thus kindled had indeed its centre in an elect line, chosen of God for His world-wide purpose of grace, the line itself being almost a continuous type of the great redeeming work for which it made preparation.

We wish our readers to approach this subject not as a theological dogma, but as historic fact. Let us ask ourselves candidly whether or not whatever of moral redemption the world has known has not come to us through Jesus of Nazareth, and if this be admitted as a fact, we shall not dispute about dogma or theories of atonement, but willingly address ourselves to follow whithersoever a candid study of this fact may lead us.

DIVISION V.—REDEMPTION

OUR study of man's moral constitution and sin reveal the fact that while under that constitution there may be a possibility of salvation, nature provides no moral force by which we may be saved. By both natural and moral sequence penalty can only follow sin as a necessary consequence. Therefore if any salvation can come to man, if this persistent faith of the race is to be realised in fact, salvation must come not by the operation of nature from within ourselves or by our own act, but by help from without, *i.e.* from above. New forces both of moral nature and motive, and also of moral action, must be introduced to meet that which under the old nature and the old law can only issue in despair. Such moral help from without or above is a new nature, supernatural. Through sin supernatural religion becomes a necessity.

God, Creation, Providence, Sin, are facts of the universe and its history. They exist, God as the fountain head, the others as the order of nature, either as the work of God or man. But this order of nature includes no provision for redemption from sin. It may, and we believe does, admit of it. But if sin appears and redemption is provided, it is a new work of God, and so in the

true sense supernatural. It is a special Divine intervention to save man from sin. We cannot therefore turn to nature or to reason, or to natural conscience, or natural religion for light on this subject. We must look for it in history. If God has intervened with special provisions for man's salvation from sin, the provision must be found as an existent, nay, most prominent, important, and unmistakable fact in the world's moral history.

Christianity professes to be such a provision. It is essentially the revelation of redemption in Christ Jesus.

We have already examined the claims of Christianity to be regarded as not only a true religion but pre-eminently the true religion, a supernatural revelation of God to man in Christ Jesus. All that we have said under that head applies here and finds here its fitting point of unity in a system of religious truth. We now find supernatural religion to be a moral necessity, and we find provision for its introduction in the moral and religious constitution of the race. While supernatural it is thus not unnatural. It on the other hand preserves the closest connection with the moral and religious order of nature. By this harmony of the supernatural order with natural religion, with moral order, as well as with a wider unity of all natural law, our religious faith receives its most important confirmation and Christianity is especially commended to us as God's remedy for sin.

The record of this revelation we have in the Scriptures of the Old Testament and the New. As we study its historic development, we shall find that the religious faith in God, Creation, Providence and responsibility is not only recognized as a natural order of things, and as truth of fact, but also that they are nowhere spoken of as a matter of special revelation, and are accepted as acknowledged truth. So also sin is spoken of as an existent fact, perverting the right order of things, but it is traced up to its origin as an intruder in God's world, and against it judgment is revealed both in nature and revelation. The whole system thus preserves a most perfect unity both in natural and moral order. Everywhere the Divine revelation is linked on to all that God has already unfolded, and is so fitted to it that they form a perfect harmony. The supernatural while it reaches far beyond yet grows out of the natural; it is the work of the one God. Hereafter we shall see that the Atonement itself as the great central force of redemption is not an unnatural thing in God's world, but is linked on to the moral constitution of the race as if provision had been made for it in the eternal counsels of God. We shall find that the principle of solidarity in responsibility which we have already studied as yielding important results in our doctrine of sin, and which is a patent natural fact in human history, lies at the basis of both redemption and atonement and constitutes the foundation of the entire work of man's salvation from sin. But

while the possibility of salvation thus lies in nature, the moral power which makes that possibility actual is not in nature. It is a new gift from God, and thus is in the true sense supernatural. Jesus Christ brings in a moral kingdom into this world, but yet "not of this world."

In another respect this supernatural order is linked to the natural. All evolution as an ascending series is based upon the supernatural, the periodic coming into nature of new and higher forces. The Redemptive order is a higher order. "Where sin abounded grace did much more abound." Supernatural redemption is thus the latest of a series of wonderful steps in each of which God reveals Himself in new and higher aspects of His Being, from glory to glory; and in each of which His creation rises to a higher perfection. What He has still in reserve for us we yet know not, but we do know that it will be a yet more perfect revealing of Himself and bestowal of His own image upon His creatures.

CHAPTER I

THE PRIMITIVE REVELATION OF REDEMPTION

THAT in some way after the appearance of sin in the race God revealed to men the hope of salvation from it, is evident from the universal existence of that hope even in the face of sin. Such hope quite as much implies a way of deliverance as does conscience a judgment. The ancient traditions embodied in the book of Genesis, but preserved also in various forms among other nations, have preserved an idea of this revelation, as they have of the origin of sin, and this idea has passed through the Hebrew Scriptures into our Christian faith. From the book of Genesis we may make the following summary of this primitive revelation.

1. An original revelation of Divine judgment against sin, and of hope of deliverance following the origin of sin.

2. A continuation and even development of this faith to Noah.

3. A second great revelation of judgment against sin, and of salvation from it in the deluge.

4. A new development of sin resulting in the centering of the hope of salvation in the covenant

family of Abraham. The religious institutions of this primitive age were the family, sacrificial worship, and probably the weekly Sabbath. We have already dealt with the first sin, as Paul deals with it as a historic fact. Such it must have been under any possible construction of the third of Genesis, and under any possible view of the facts obvious in the past history and present condition of the race. In the same spirit we must deal with the revelation of Divine judgment against sin, and of the hope of salvation embodied in the same primitive document. There may be differences of opinion as to its nature, origin, and interpretation, but the facts embodied in the document so accord with universal human history and experience that they cannot be questioned. The fact of a beginning of sin near the beginning of humanity, and of a revelation to man of God's judgment against sin, and of a hope of deliverance appears from this, that these two ideas of judgment against sin, and hope of deliverance from it, have passed into all ancient religions, and are even to-day the almost universal possession of the race. We need not therefore speculate as to how this revelation was given, or how the record of it in Genesis came to take its present form, or how that form is to be interpreted. For the purpose of religious faith, and even of theology, it is sufficient to know the facts which we think are quite indisputable. Everywhere, from this first revelation downward, men are seen to be conscious of sin, and to be holding

fast to some hope that in some way they may be again restored to the favour of God. The content of this first revelation was thus a matter of universal conscience, and was never after entirely lost to the race. What was that content?

1. It bound up the pain, the toil, and the suffering of death which fall to the lot of men with their sin. This is not only set forth in the third of Genesis, but is to-day the universal consciousness of the race, a religious or moral instinct of faith, something which they feel rather than reason out.

2. It set forth a hope of deliverance from the power of the tempter and of sin, wrought out through man, and finally triumphant. We can only apprehend the importance of this twofold primitive revelation when we see how completely it has entered into and governed the religious development of man in all subsequent ages.

The fourth and fifth chapters of Genesis, especially the fifth, can scarcely be called a history. They are constructed partly from genealogical tables, one of the very oldest forms of literature, and partly from intermingled narrative touching the beginnings of family life, of religious worship, and of various acts of human life. But by far their most important element is their portraiture of the growing consciousness of sin and its relation to God on the one hand, and of salvation through the Divine favour on the other. In Cain and Lamech we have set forth the development of sin in connection with the most familiar aspects and

passions of human life. In the very nature of the case only thus could sin have been developed. In Abel, Seth, and Enoch we have the development of religious faith, and in the translation of Enoch its culmination in the idea of a complete triumph over death as the penalty of sin. Finally the world appears as divided into two lines, one of sin and death, the other of faith and salvation, the one culminating in a world of sinners and in God's judgment against their sin by the flood, and the other in righteous Noah and the saving of his house.

There is thus involved in these ancient traditional documents an entire historical development of humanity on its moral and religious side, as well as of its civilisation. Of that development we have no history in the modern sense of the term. Under the most literal interpretation, it is only a survival of fragments. They are like a few fossil specimens in a rock from which all other vestiges of its former life have disappeared. Even the original materials of these may be replaced by the enduring flint of a later age. But however changed or fragmentary they may be, they tell a story of the vanished past. That story reads thus :—Men sinned ; penalty followed their sin ; their development of civilisation increased their sin ; still heavier judgment fell upon them : but out of the multitudes of sinners a few sought and found God. And these were the men by whom the race was preserved and carried forward to the higher life of a new age. Obscure and fragment-

ary as these traditions are, they thus carry with them the attestation of truth. They are true to all human history.

In the tradition of the Deluge we have another important step in the revelation of sin and salvation. Already in Abel and Enoch we have illustrations of men finding assurance of favour with God. This assurance is now repeated in a most marked manner to Noah. In some way the Divine voice which gave him intimation of coming judgment against sin, and of the necessary means of salvation, gave him assurance that, "Thee have I seen righteous before Me in this generation."

We have thus at this point a cumulative revelation :—

1. Of Divine judgment against sin.
2. Of Divine conviction and reproof of sin.
3. Of Divine favour toward the righteous.
4. Of a way of salvation to obedient faith.
5. And, following all, of Divine covenant of promise for the future.

That this revelation was definite, and given through actual events, of which the tradition is a fair account, we think a thoroughly reasonable view. These events left a most profound and lasting impression on the minds of men, as appears in religious tradition and even in mythology. We find substantially in all south-western Asia and in both Europe and America remembrances, either as tradition or myth, pointing to some such remarkable event as leaving a permanent impress on the world's moral and religious faith.

We have still another fragmentary picture of a new development of sin after the flood, and of judgment in the form of a political separation of the nations. The document is again brief and obscure, and has been variously interpreted. But it certainly means that in some way which men acknowledged to be Divine, the compact family or tribal organisation of the human race, which was again giving rise to unholy ambitions and purposes, was broken up; and a scattering of nations took place, resulting in a movement out of which came the call of Abraham and our first distinct and somewhat complete record of the personal life of a man who walked with God in the consciousness of His favour. There can be no doubt that at this point we stand before a great epoch in the revelation of God's salvation to a sinful race, and before passing to its consideration we may close our present chapter by a summary of universal and primitive ideas in religion. These ideas are to be found not only in the origins preserved in our Hebrew book of Genesis, but also, in sometimes obscure, darkened, or perverted form, yet in form capable of recognition in the world's religions in most widely separated lands and ages.

1. A God, a Divine power above man.

2. That sin is displeasing to God.

3. That favour and forgiveness may be sought and found.

Whatever may have been the origin of these ideas, the evidence is ample that they existed among men in the dawn of history, and that

almost universally from B.C. 2000 to 4000. This evidence appears in the historic records of all nations of whom such records remain; and far beyond these records monumental altars and places of worship tell the same story.

Along with these beliefs we have various religious institutions also existing among men from the very dawn of history. In the forefront of these was the family. The family was of course natural, social, and political, as well as religious. But as we find it in the earliest records of history, it was organised on a religious basis, and was the very foundation of moral and religious order. In that religious organisation the father was head, protector, provider, governor, and priest of his family. He represented the family before God, in the councils of the state, on the field of battle, as well as in the fundamental industries by which men were supported. This organisation of the family prevailed among all nations which have left us records reaching back to the dawn of history. Exception to this in polyandry and in indiscriminate sexual intercourse are indeed mentioned, but as enormities of utterly degraded peoples, without religion, law, or civilisation. This organisation of human society in families is founded in religion; it implies law, order, responsibility, right and God over all. He is the God of all the families of the earth. The family becomes the nursery of all moral virtues, both the regulative and the motive, from the obedience of fear to the assistance of love.

Side by side with the family stands sacrifice as a mode of approach to God. The origin of this universal institution is a mystery apart from ideas of sin, penalty, and forgiveness. From the beginning it involved the shedding of blood. Mere nature religion might lead to offerings of fruits and flowers, but not to sacrifice. The institution as an expression of religious feeling brings us face to face with suffering and death; and, as all religious history testifies, these were felt to be the penalty of sin. The idea of vicarious suffering and vicarious death is thus bound up with that of sacrifice. The immemorial existence of this institution is thus another universal testimony to the early existence of the ideas which are set forth in the early chapters of Genesis.

The third institution coming out of this dawn of history is the Sabbath. It is not so prominent as the other two, and its observance was less general. But it too bears testimony to the idea of God, and of both moral and religious obligation to him. As associated with special sacrifices, it becomes an auxiliary to the moral and religious teaching of that institution.

CHAPTER II

THE CHOSEN PEOPLE

WITH the call of Abraham we emerge from what may be called the prehistoric period of Revelation, and enter a region of more definite historical tradition. The Abrahamic covenant is the natural sequel of the earlier universal revelation which we have just studied. The recipient and the bearer to the world of the new revelation is a patriarch, a family head, of whom it is said, "I know him that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord to do justice and judgment." The new religious order was thus founded in the existing family institution. To this family head are given promises which reach far into the future, and imply for his family a preeminent position in the religious history of the race. These promises by no means imply the withdrawal from the great body of men of the knowledge and favour of God already bestowed, nor the limitation of God's purpose of redemption to any one nation or people or class; but the choice of a particular people, that through them the blessing might come to all the nations of the earth. The necessity for this special and

more limited selection for the purposes of extended revelation will appear presently.

The first step in the elective process was the separation of the chosen family from the contamination of the surrounding idolatry then rapidly increasing in the world. "God had said to Abram, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto the land that I will shew thee." Referring to this period, Joshua reminds Israel that then their fathers already "served other gods." Religious and moral degeneracy of the great body of the race through idolatry thus created a necessity for this new dispensation.

Idolatry may be described as that perversion of religion which substitutes the fictions of imagination for the facts by which God is revealed to man; and the lower passions and desires of human nature for the pure moral spirit of true religion. The introduction of material embodiments of these degenerate ideas resulted in animal worship on the one hand, and in image worship on the other. Not infrequently both were combined. Few tendencies in religion have been more degrading than this. Even the darkest ignorance and superstition does not lead to more disastrous results. Attaching itself to the onward progress of civilization in art and luxury, it has proved the utter ruin of one after another of the proudest fabrics of ancient history. If, then, the world must be redeemed and purified, special provisions of moral and religious forces

became necessary to preserve, and finally establish, the true knowledge of God among men. This was the first mission of the chosen people. This separation from idolatry and its uncleanness was officially marked by the institution of circumcision. Side by side with this separation was the development of the personal religious life of Abraham. Of that life we have a comparatively full idea. The tradition has evidently been well preserved. There is a marked absence of anything like legendary embellishment. The failures as well as the excellencies of the patriarch are all noted. The course of Divine revelation to and through him, though most wonderful in itself as one of the highest examples of spiritual life, is presented in the simplest and most modest terms. But such was its spiritual perfection, that St Paul finds in Abraham the means of defining and illustrating the fundamental principles of Christianity itself. The familiar facts of Abraham's religious life are recorded from the twelfth chapter of Genesis onward, and in chapters xii. 1-3, xiii. 14-18, xv. 1-6, and xxii. 1-14 we have the great central promises of the Abrahamic covenant.

These promises implied, as their very foundation, a deep moral and religious consciousness. God made Himself known to Abraham. Of the manner of this revelation, which has sometimes been distinguished as theophany, nothing is said. We have no scenic description, such as is given us in the sixth of Isaiah. It is simply said, "God appeared," or "God said unto Abraham."

This implies the most distinct and definite consciousness of a personal God and of His will. Both conscious convictions of duty and of promise appeal to the religious faith of this patriarch, not as strange things, but as if usual. "I am God Almighty, walk before Me and be thou perfect"; "Fear not, Abram, I am thy shield and thy exceeding great reward." Such words as these give us glimpses of the inner life of this great man. It was a life of profound religious reverence, of great moral earnestness, and of holy confidence toward God. He was, as well as was called, the friend of God. Here, then, we have the second great element in the mission of the chosen people, and the second necessity for their call, the cultivation of a deeper moral and spiritual life. The general sense of sin, and penitent spirit, and the general confidence toward God, which were the outcome of the primitive revelation, were forces not powerful enough for the tremendous task of redemption. Concentration of moral forces must beget an intensity of energy and an earnestness of conviction, such as creates the puritan, the reformer, the hero, and the martyr before the world could be saved.

Again, in this call of Abraham was laid the foundation of a religious centre of the world's hope: "In Thee shall all the families of the earth be blessed." The development of this hope into the doctrine of the Messiah, whose kingdom is to rule and bless the world, becomes the central feature of the new dispensation.

Mosaism.

The development of the chosen family to a nation, with the special providential history which accompanied that development, constitutes the next stage in the unfolding of God's purpose of redemption. Mosaism and Prophetism were but the development in the wider field of a national life of the fundamental principles already involved in the call of Abraham, viz., a closer and more personal relation to God, a deeper moral sense, and a stronger and more definite faith in the future, finally widening out to embrace a blessing for all nations. The family phase of religious life under a strong religious headship, such as that of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, had nearly, though not quite, exhausted itself in the five hundred years between Abraham and Moses. The home in which Moses was born and first trained was one evidently after the ancient type, one under parents who commanded their children to keep the way of the Lord. But such homes were now rare, if we may judge from the general character of the people. The chosen people had not only fallen under political bondage, but were rapidly being assimilated to the idolatrous spirit by which they were surrounded. If their high calling was to be accomplished a new departure was immediately necessary. That new departure was the mission of Moses. It was to link religion with the national life of a chosen and separate people, as the call of Abraham had linked it with

that of a chosen and separated family. The object was still the same, the preparation of a moral force which, under Christ, should go forth to take spiritual possession of the world.

The new departure was ushered in by a great ethnic event, the deliverance from the bondage of Egypt. This event was the outward occasion through which the revelation made through Moses came. Two centuries of bondage left the chosen people in a miserable plight, both as regards their moral sense and their religious faith. The deliverance was like an earthquake for the awakening of new faith, and the accompanying judgments were equally mighty for the awakening of moral sense, while the discipline of the wilderness once more developed the moral fibre needed for their work.

Through Moses was effected not only these great political events, with their corresponding moral and religious results, but he was also called to lay at least the foundations of political and religious organisation for the new people. Church and state here were one, and the legal system embraced both, without even the lines of separation which appeared in later times. The system was at once moral and ecclesiastical, civil and religious and military, in fact, regulated the whole life of the people without distinction of functions. In this it only resembled all other national systems of that age. Its most conspicuous characteristic was its sharp moral definitions. It fixed the sense of sin beyond the possibility of

mistake. Abraham might deceive his conscience as well as Pharaoh by thinking that the end justified the means, but there was no avoiding the "thou shalt not" of Moses. The way of sin was strictly hedged off. Again, the religious ordinances at every turn drove the worshipping people to seek for forgiveness. It was pre-eminently a system for a people with a developed consciousness of sin. Every transgression had not only its penalty, but its atoning sacrifice. Of the development of this system for four hundred years we know but little. We have evidence in the traditions embodied in the books of Joshua, Judges, and the earlier prophetic histories, all seemingly compiled from ancient materials, that it was a thoroughly human development; that its religious spirit often ran into fanaticism and ferocity, and was not always free from low forms of superstition. There was the same contrast between the high moral and religious enlightenment of Moses and the ages immediately following, that we find between the Apostolic spirit and that of generations immediately following in the history of Christianity. The God-given ideas were left to work their way out through very unpromising human material. But step by step it won its way, reaching the summit of its spiritual power in the days of Samuel and David, and its decline was already begun with Solomon, when the pomp of ceremony began to take the place of the broken and contrite heart, and God had already initiated a new dispensation.

The weakness and the power of the Mosaic system appear together in the traditions of the Judges and the early days of Samuel. We have seen that while the preceding dispensations developed a general religious spirit, expressed in universal religious institutions, such as prayer, sacrifice and family religion, and while Abraham concentrated these in family life, there was yet wanting provision for a national religious life. The peculiarity of the Mosaic system was its provision for the expression of religion in the life of the nation. Its moral law passed over into the civil law of the nation. Its religious rites were no longer a family altar and individual worship; they were of an organized and national character. Moses gave a people, already separate and distinct by the covenant of circumcision, a national organization; for war, they were organized in tribes; for justice, they were placed under judges and elders; but for instruction and religion a priestly order, and, perhaps later, the tribe of Levi were set apart. It does not appear that this organization reached its completeness in the time of Moses. He probably only laid foundations. The supreme leadership of the state he himself held and Joshua after him, but there was no provision for its perpetuation. The king came in long after, and with him a far more complicated organization, not only civil and military but also religious, which was developed under David and Solomon. But of this development Moses laid the foundation and from his time

organized rites for the maintenance of religious life in the nation became a part of this Divinely-ordered history.

The form of this organization as we have seen was a state-church and a church-state; *i.e.*, the secular and religious functions were completely united. There can we think be no question that this was a necessity in that age. Physical force rather than moral ideas, then dominated the world. It was still the age of the development of sin; and sin is the triumph of the brute over the spirit. If moral and spiritual ideas were to survive such an age, they must have some embodiment of physical strength. But even in this age, this system soon developed its weakness, for the secular interest was stronger than the religious, and worldly fashions and ambitions ruled the policy of the church-state, and made it, in the greatness of its wealth and of its military conquests, forget its religious calling. The outward forms of national worship were maintained, but they were mere outward forms, dead ceremonies. This called forth the prophetic order and the next great step in the unfolding of redemption.

It will thus be seen that Mosaism added no new element of truth to the religious ideas already given to mankind. Its mission was the perpetuation and enforcement of truth. Sin and expiation were presented in more definite form, and the conception of God became more distinctly personal and ethical. But it supplied a large amount of new machinery and institutions for the presentation

of truth and its maintenance in the face of growing idolatrous superstition. It also broadened the sense of moral and religious obligation, extending it to national as well as individual and family relation to God.

Prophecy.

To supplement and complete the work of the Mosaic system in its conflict with idolatry and sin, and to meet its degeneracy into formalism, the prophets were raised up. They were men whose hearts had been strongly moved by the Spirit of God, and who under this inspiration judged clearly and truly of the moral and religious character of their times. At first their work was the completion and establishment of the Mosaic system in opposition to idolatrous tendencies. Until the time of Samuel the men of the prophetic spirit were largely engaged in this work. At first their work was more largely of a political character, the enforcement of law, the awakening of a national spirit, the vindication of liberty, and the salvation of the chosen people from threatened absorption in the idolatrous nations around them. The inspired men were then the judges. Later, when their distinct nationality had been gradually established, and kings were raised up, the first of these also were characterised, and perhaps even selected from the possession of the same divine gift. But already in the days of Samuel, if not before, the prophetic order made its appearance, whose work was of a more purely

religious character. They were the teachers of the people, rebuking sin, enforcing the law, and bringing the entire nation into conscious spiritual relation to God. It was this preliminary prophetic work which laid the foundations of the national greatness of Israel under David and Solomon.

But the introduction of the Kingdom called forth a new phase of prophetic work. The prophet became a distinctly spiritual messenger from God to king and people, reproving their sins, and enforcing true spirituality and sincerity in their religious life. The first, third, fifth, and seventh chapters of Isaiah are excellent examples of this work. Mingled with this we find the conflict with idolatry extending far down into the period of the kingdom.

But while thus applying and completing the work of Moses, so that their prophetic preaching was also known as *torah*, or instruction in the law of the Lord, they had also a most important contribution of their own to make in the development of God's purpose of redemption, an enlargement of religious faith and spiritual life to the full measure of preparation for the coming of Christ. This contribution is now clearly recognised and distinguished from other elements of their work as Messianic prophecy. It seems to us to begin with Nathan in the days of David. In 2 Sam. vii. 12-17, with David's comment in the following verses. Some, however, regard it beginning only with Isaiah iu the days of Ahaz and Hezekiah.

Messianic prophecy embraced a number of distinct elements which were gradually perfected and united in the minds of the prophets and their hearers.

1. There was the idea of a Kingdom of God, as opposed to the kingdoms of the world and of false gods. This naturally found its embodiment or representation to their minds in the political Israel; but faith in it as God's kingdom was a truly religious faith, its attributes were moral and divine, and the outward embodiment maintained and developed the spiritual conception.

2. There was the idea of an anointed King (*Messiah*), of the seed of David, chosen of God, to bring this Divine Kingdom to universal triumph and to spiritual perfection. To this King are ascribed the most God-like attributes, and his ideal portrait is exalted to a glory to be realised only in the spirit, and in Christ.

3. There was the idea that this Kingdom was essentially a reign of righteousness, a triumph not of the force of arms, but of the power of truth, right, and religion.

4. There was the rise of a new universalism, linked on to the promise given to Abraham, and to the original hope of humanity of deliverance from sin. The chosen people and the city of Zion were still the centre, but the "Gentiles shall come to thy light and kings to the brightness of thy rising."

5. There was finally the conception of an atonement for sin through the suffering servant

of Jehovah, at first the chosen people, and then their Messianic head God's Servant, the Branch, out of the root of David. "When He shall make His soul an offering for sin, He shall see His seed, He shall prolong His days, and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in His hand." From, as we conceive it, the time of David onward, this conception of an ideal Kingdom of truth and righteousness and of an anointed King becomes part of the faith of the chosen people and of the common prophetic outlook, appearing continuously in the writings of prophets and prophetic psalmists to the very close of the Old Testament canon.

This Messianic hope borrows its form from contemporaneous history. The history itself is almost typical prophecy, and continually lends itself easily and naturally to the expression of this growing hope. In days of prosperity the Messiah is the glorious and triumphant King, who at times, as under Uzziah or Hezekiah, seems almost at hand. In days of captivity He is the suffering servant, bearing the sins of many. When the captivity is well nigh over he is the new leader of Israel back to the promised land, another Joshua, or the coming King returning to Zion. But whatever its form, it gives a new direction to the religious faith of the chosen people. It turns their thoughts from the past to the future. Moses had centred their faith around the deliverance from Egypt. The religious institutions which he established were commemorative, except such as had their origin in the seasons.

They remembered the deliverance which God had wrought for their fathers, and all their patriotic and religious virtues were built upon this. Thus while the religious spirit of the Mosaic system centred in the past or in the present as thanksgiving for the fruits of the earth, or a yearly atonement for sins, that of prophecy built for the future. Without attempting to settle dates we may illustrate its spirit in the splendour of hope pictured for us in the seventy-second psalm, or under Uzziah and Hezekiah, in such exultant expressions as Isaiah ix. 6, 7 : " For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given ; and the government shall be upon his shoulder ; and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and of peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David and upon his kingdom to establish it and to uphold it with judgment and with righteousness, from henceforth even for ever. The zeal of the Lord of Hosts shall perform this." Other conspicuous examples of this Messianic vision of the future we have in Isa. ii. 2 ; Isa. iv. 1-4 ; Isa. xi. and xii. ; Amos ix. 11 ; Joel ii. 28, iii. 18 ; Hosea xiv. 4, etc.

It must be noted that in all these prophets there is the most intimate connection of righteousness with this hope. They were no singers of a pleasant song to a prosperous and self-satisfied people. By far the larger part of their work is the denunciation of Divine judgment against

the sins of this very people to whose faith they offered these wonderful promises. The most intense moral fidelity is mingled with the fervour of this vision of hope. The call to repentance everywhere precedes the exhibition of the Messianic salvation.

The coming kingdom represents the first phase of Messianic prophecy. But when we come to the close of the seventh century B.C., we are introduced to an entirely new development of the Messianic hope, and to a more complete fulness of the prophetic revelation. The earlier prophets had already commenced to colour their pictures with the shadow of a coming judgment, as the background upon which they painted. Their moral fidelity demanded this. The coming King was not merely the triumphant head of the kingdom of righteousness; He is deliverer and Saviour as well. Every period of chastisement in the national history made the conception of God's saving power and of His coming salvation more perfect. All the varied experiences of the national life of this people, and even their personal and individual history, added to the fulness and variety of religious faith as set forth in psalm and proverb, so that the religious lessons of faith, hope, and consolation, as well as of warning and duty, thus exhibited in a varied literature become food for the souls of men in all the ages. Out of the reverses of national history we have also many of our most beautiful Messianic prophecies.

But when the final judgment came in the destruction of the temple and the city, and carrying away of the people into captivity, the blow was so terrible that for a time faith seems to have staggered, unless it were in the heart of a Jeremiah, and even he became the prophet of tears. But even out of his tears he, too, has still a vision of faith. "I know the thoughts that I think toward you, saith the Lord, thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give you hope in your latter end. And ye shall call upon Me, and ye shall go and pray unto Me, and I will hearken unto you. And ye shall seek Me and find Me, when ye search for Me with all your heart. And I will be found of you, saith the Lord, and I will turn again your captivity, and I will gather you from all the nations, and from all the places whither I have driven you, saith the Lord, and I will bring you back again unto the place whence I caused you to be carried away captive." When in the next generation, out of this God-given seed the Messianic faith again springs up, it is in a new and higher form. This form culminates in the fifty-third of Isaiah and in the twenty-second psalm. It grows out of the terrible problem of the awful sufferings of those who were at least relatively God's righteous people. The book of Job, it may be, represents the conflict of faith over this problem. Jeremiah, who linked the two periods, and Ezekiel, who represents the earlier period of the captivity, still use the regal forms in speaking of the Messiah. But Jeremiah

leads us gradually to the great teacher and servant of Jehovah, and Ezekiel builds a new temple and a new priesthood with an atonement which brings perfect purification, and a new covenant with perfect removal of sin is part of Jeremiah's Messianic age in which all shall know the Lord from the least to the greatest of them. The standpoint of these two prophets is completed in the restored city and temple of Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi, where the royal Messiah again appears. But it is in the second Isaiah and in the related psalms and the book of Daniel that we find the idea fully wrought out of the world's salvation through the sufferings of Jehovah's elect servant, and the narrow view of the separate people again broadening out into the universal spirit of the book of Genesis. According to these latest exponents of the spirit of prophecy, the ideal kingdom is to be purely spiritual; its victories are not of arms but of truth, Isa. xlii. 1-4; its King is to be the servant of men; its purification is to be accomplished not by a splendid ritual but by a suffering life, Isa. liii., Dan. ix. 26; and of such a kingdom there is to be no end.

From this wonderful climax of prophetic faith we may now look back and sum up the entire field of saving truth which God had thus revealed to men, and especially to the faith of the chosen people.

1. God Himself stands distinctly revealed in His unity, personality, and perfection, and in His

moral attributes and His works of Creation and Providence. The great elements of natural religion are thus very fully developed.

2. Divine judgment against sin is very clearly manifest, and the consciousness of sin strongly developed along all the leading lines of moral duty.

3. The Divine mercy in the forgiveness of sins is explicitly revealed as a fact, and is attested by the conscious experience of God's favour by many illustrious men.

4. The way to that mercy is revealed through a typical atonement.

5. The organisation of the Divine economy for the world's salvation as a kingdom of righteousness is unfolded not only as a promise for the future, but also as a living reality in a chosen people.

6. An ideal King in this kingdom is clearly set forth to the faith of the chosen people.

7. The dignity of service and suffering in this kingdom are clearly revealed, and the true atonement for sin through the suffering of God's servant is prefigured and set forth to religious faith.

8. Finally, in all this revelation the fundamental elements of repentance and faith are continually presented and enforced. By these God's salvation from sin was efficiently introduced among men, not only among the chosen people, but, as shewn in the eleventh of Hebrews, in the primitive ages and extending to the outside nations.

And yet all this work, these conceptions of

truth which it took thousands of years to teach to a sinful race, was but preparatory to the full manifestation of the Son of God.

But before turning to the grand central study of His person and work, we may for a single moment glance at other collateral lines of preparation for His coming.

Collateral Preparations for the Christ.

Those added no new element to religious truth. They contained no new revelation of God. But in the expressive language of Scripture they prepared the way of the Lord. First we have the Greek language and mode of thought. The Hebrew mind was intuitive and grasped broad outlines of truth. It was specially fitted to lay the great moral and religious outlines. The Greek, on the other hand, was subtle, analytic, and versatile, and suited to development and perfection. In delicate distinction and exact expression of thought it has never been excelled if equalled. Egypt and the old empires of the Euphrates valley also brought their contributions, adding grandeur of magnitude and richness of sensuous imagery to the narrower circle of Hebrew ideas. And all these elements were brought together and fused as in a crucible by the conquests of Alexander and his successors. They all served as material out of which might be constructed the new form of Christianity. The substance was Christ and the law and the prophets which He came to fulfil, *i.e.* to fill out to

their completion. Then came Rome with her conquest of the world, and the reduction of its vast provinces to one grand system of law and order, giving men an idea of a world-wide kingdom, such as the new spiritual kingdom was to be, a contrast of the flesh with the spirit, of physical force with spiritual power, of sin with holiness, the anti-christ, the great enemy with which the young Christian giant was to grapple, but even as the enemy preparing the way, and by his greatness preparing the minds of men for the superior greatness of his conqueror. The highways of his legions became the highways of the missionaries of the Cross, his provinces became the provinces of the Christian church, his capital cities, their patriarchal seats, and, in fact, Christianity came in as a new spiritual kingdom to fill in and replace the vast emptiness of the decadent earthly kingdom. These collateral preparations were not a part of the unfolding of revelation. They did not enter as elements into God's great salvation. But they served as a providential preparation for its incoming, and proved that the fulness of time was now come. That into Christianity were imported elements from the far east is exceedingly improbable. India, China, and Japan were a world apart, and were so to continue for centuries to come. When, perhaps in our own day, Christ shall also come to these, their providential lines of preparation will also be manifest, and here also will He come to a people prepared for the Lord.

CHAPTER III

THE FULL SALVATION

FOR the purposes of our study we must take the entire Christian revelation as a whole from the birth of Christ to the close of the Apostolic age, and study it as a revelation of salvation for man. Our study is not merely one of progressive Biblical theology. It is rather of the incoming into the world of new saving truth with its spiritual light and life and power. It is a new and far more perfect sense of sin than men had ever known before, and it is a new and far more perfect faith in God through Christ saving men from their sins. Its entrance is connected with the advent of a person who brings to men both this light and this power, and who is in Himself "the way, the truth, and the light." The doctrine of the Deity of Christ underlies this revelation, and, as we have seen, grew directly out of it in the living faith of the Apostolic church. The study of this doctrine it is needless here to repeat. But this person was man as well as God, and His advent to the world for us and for our salvation was thus an incarnation, the unity of Deity with humanity. The statement of these doctrines in the Church is embodied in the formula of the

Council of Chalcedon ; Christ was truly God of one substance with the Father ; perfect man, of one substance with us ; two natures unconfused, one person inseparable.

But without expanding this doctrine at the present, or the supernatural facts upon which it is founded, we turn to the fact that when this personal Saviour of men came to the world, the chosen people were looking for the long expected Messiah. It is true that the great majority held very low and sensuous conceptions of His coming. Their misery was not the misery of sin but of Roman oppression, the salvation for which they waited was but earthly, and the universal kingdom which they expected was but the empire of the Jews, and not a *civitas dei.* But to some the higher spiritual conception was given ; their burden was the burden of sin, and the salvation for which they waited was a deliverance from its power. To bring this spiritual salvation was the work of Christ. When Jesus made His appearance He at once began to proclaim, as John had before him, this kingdom in these words, " Repent for the kingdom of Heaven is at hand." In that first word repent he sums up all God's moral revelation for the world's salvation, all that God had done to make the world feel sin to be sin. In the second the kingdom of Heaven is at hand, He sums up the faith which, as we have seen, had been growing for centuries in the hearts of the chosen people through the ministry of the prophets and the whole course of Messianic promise.

But when Christ came He was very far from being a mere teacher or prophet of old truth, however comprehensive and important. Nor was He a mere revealer or enforcer of new truth, though in that He far exceeded all who had gone before Him. John the Baptist was "that prophet," more than a prophet; in all the line there was none greater than he, since it was his to complete the prophetic work and office by making immediate preparation for Christ. This he did not only by preaching repentance and the approach of the kingdom with a power hitherto unequalled, so that men of all classes flocked unto him, but also by pointing the people directly to the Christ Himself. "Behold the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world." With these words the work of the prophets was complete.

Our Lord at first in a very natural way seemed only to be taking up and carrying forward His work of awakening men to a sense of sin and expectation of the Messianic salvation. But this preliminary work does not proceed very far before the impress of His own higher personality is felt. "Mighty works do shew forth themselves in Him." "Never man spake as this Man." "He taught them as one having authority and not as the scribes." His hearers felt the power of the messenger as well as of the message. He was not a servant, but the Son in His own house. The Man, His authority, the depth and penetration of His words, the spotless purity of His life,

His supernatural works, all awoke in the breasts of men convictions of sin such as they had never known before, and a faith in God through Him which they had never known before. In His presence the penitent spirit, the meek and lowly heart, to hate sin, to believe in God and in a Father's love, all seemed easy. It was hearts drinking in this spirit, in sympathetic touch with this wonderful man that cried, "Shew us the Father and it sufficeth us." And when after His death and rising again, in answer to this faith, they received the gift of the Holy Ghost, bringing to their lives Divine power and to their hearts a new life, and to their works supernatural character, the Christ whom they had followed stood fully revealed to them as the Son of God and the Saviour of the world. In our day we are very likely to invert this order and approach our religion from the theological standpoint. But not thus does Christ reveal Himself to the world. He comes in simple and lowly guise, as a man among men, not even making pronounced much less ostentatious claim to the Messiahship. He comes pouring the light of moral truth into the consciences of men from His life as well as from His words. He comes working the works of God as well as speaking words which were spirit and life. He comes telling men of the Father, and at the same time living among outcast sinners such a life of condescending grace that all weary souls sick of sin and longing for rest are drawn to Him as in Himself the very incarnation of the Father's

grace and mercy. Men feel with wonder the power of His presence, His words and His works, and then begin to say in their hearts, "Is not this the Christ?" Meanwhile He is continually speaking to them of the kingdom, unfolding its mysteries, opening up to their understanding its true nature. In this way the conviction grows upon them that this is the coming King, the Messiah. But all the while He does not commit Himself unto them, because their ideas as well as their hearts are still largely carnal. But with the chosen few He is gradually opening up clearer light and conceptions, unfolding by the imagery of nature in the incomparable form of parable the things of the Kingdom of God. But even they, when He dies upon the Cross, have almost lost faith. It is only the resurrection and Pentecost that finally prevail and found Christianity as a power of life in the souls of men. These two events first restore the faith of the disciples; secondly, give them true spiritual conceptions of the King and His kingdom; He is now "exalted a Prince and a Saviour to grant repentance unto Israel and remission of sins"; thirdly, give them full personal possession of the kingdom in their own hearts; and, lastly, make their preaching powerful for its establishment in the hearts of their fellow-men.

In this way the spiritual life of the first Christians became centred in Christ as before, as Jews it had been centred in the invisible God. "Ye believe in God, believe also in Me."

Faith in Him has brought this new life and power into their souls. Gradually out of this living faith there is unfolded to their understanding all that is implied in it, that He is God, one with the Father, God "manifest in the flesh," the Lord of the kingdom, and that His death is the world's atonement for sin. These doctrines were only the direct outcome of the personal revelation of Jesus as the Saviour. The revelation of Christ thus made was the revelation of God's full salvation for men. It included four grand constituent elements :

1. The Person of Christ.
2. His atoning work.
3. His mediatorial office.
4. The office and work of the Holy Spirit.

Out of this manifestation of Christ as the Saviour and of salvation in Him under the preaching of the Apostles there grew up—

1. A new doctrine of the individual spiritual life in Christ, and of the way of salvation.

2. Of the organisation and work of the Church, which was henceforth to represent God's chosen people in the world.

3. Of the outcome of this Divine kingdom both in this world and in the world to come.

CHAPTER IV

THE PERSON OF CHRIST

CHRISTIANITY enlarges and strengthens the world's religious faith, not so much by the addition of new teachings or doctrines presented by Jesus of Nazareth as by presenting to the world's faith and worship God manifest in the flesh in the person of Jesus Christ. The grasping of this fact by a living faith with its corollaries of the atonement, the mediatorial office and the gift of the Holy Ghost, constitute the historical founding of Christianity. In this personality there was embodied the living exhibition of Divine holiness, giving the world at once its highest ideal of moral goodness and its deepest sense of sin. In Him was also embodied the infinite love of God bringing to religious faith the fulness of Divine mercy in the forgiveness of sins. The two fundamental elements of inward experience by which from the very first God had saved men from their sins were thus brought to full perfection in Christ Jesus. All ways and means by which this salvation was brought to men in the past were but imperfect foreshadowings of this. Christ was the reality.

This new faith of Christianity Paul sets forth in these words: "Who being in the form of God thought it not a booty to be eagerly retained to be equal with God, but emptied Himself, taking the form of a servant, being made in the likeness of men." To this 1 Tim. iii. 16 gives us an excellent parallel. St John states it thus: "The Word was made flesh and dwelt among us (and we beheld His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father), full of grace and truth."

This was certainly a new religious faith, a faith that at first seemed directly in the face of the old faith in one only living and true God. The word incarnation both expresses the faith and the foundation of its harmony with the old faith. We have now to consider some further facts of its appearance in the world as a religious faith.

The Incarnation.

This faith involves three elements:

1. An historic man.

2. An eternally pre-existent and Divine person incarnated in this man.

3. A supernatural birth and a consequent supernatural personality.

(1) Of the historic man the continuous church from the first century is the witness. The Church has existed from that date onward. It did not exist before that date. It was founded on faith in this person and the first believers were the companions of their Lord's earthly life. When in

the next generation some who had not seen him denied his historical reality, such doctrine was at once rejected as untrue. A living real man was the object of this first Christian faith. If additional evidence were needed we have it in Tacitus, Suetonius, Pliny and other writers, men of the first historical rank within the century and immediately after. The testimony of the Church was placed on record in our gospels almost from the beginning. A monumental record in the next century was erected in the catacombs hidden away from the persecuting rage of enemies. There is not the slightest room for doubt that the faith of the Church centred around a real man, Jesus of Nazareth, born of the Virgin Mary, crucified under Pontius Pilate.

(2) But that faith embraced the Deity of Christ as well as His humanity. In the fourth century it was defined with scientific subtlety and skill as follows:—The same perfect in Godhead and perfect in manhood, truly God, and the same truly man of a reasonable soul and body, consubstantial with the Father as to the Godhead, and the same consubstantial with us as to the manhood. "One and the same Christ; Son, Lord, Sole-begotten, of two natures unconfounded, unchanged, undivided, inseparable." Under our study of the doctrine of the Trinity we have already seen that this faith fully appeared in the Apostolic Age, and that it was founded upon the facts of the life of Christ as interpreted by the Holy Ghost in the new religious consciousness of the

Apostolic Church. These facts were especially the following :—

His own conscious claim of oneness with God.
His miraculous birth.
His sinlessness.
His supernatural intelligence.
His works of Divine power.
His resurrection.
The gift of the Holy Ghost.

It is not necessary to trace again the historical development of this faith in the preaching of the Apostles and the writings of the New Testament. It is sufficient to point to it as a fact that Christianity is essentially such a faith in God manifest in the flesh, and that it is on this account a new and distinct religious faith separated from Mosaism on the one hand and from all forms of natural religion on the other. It is not necessary to claim for this faith that it began as a rational demonstration. Its foundation was not reason, but faith. It was not a new philosophy but a religion, and the facts upon which it was founded all appeal to religious conviction rather than to reason. In fact this faith was a direct creation of the Holy Spirit in the hearts of men. It was for them only to listen to the facts and yield to the convictions of their own consciences as quickened by the Spirit of God and this faith was perfected within. The faith was a religious as distinguished from an intellectual faith. It was indeed built upon the strongest historic facts that have ever appealed to the religious nature

of man as a revelation of God. Hence, though it was a faith which tested the religious sense of certainty to the utmost, yet it was a faith yielding the fullest assurance. It came to men in demonstration of the Spirit and in power.

In its very nature the verification of such a faith must depend upon the certainty of its historical foundations, for as to its inner contents philosophy no longer keeps us company. Religion has here passed beyond the region of mere intellectual discovery, and the incarnation as a fact is a purely supernatural fact.

And yet it is not necessarily unreasonable, much less contradictory to reason. Reason may say that it is too great and glorious to be possible. We grant that it surpasses all conceptions of reason. But even reason must admit that its historic grounds are a good warrant for religious faith, and that even to reason itself they afford a moral if not an absolute demonstration. But this is only the verification of this religious faith, not the basis upon which it rests. It is merely an answer to objections. We can only indicate one or two lines of this argument.

1. The conception of an incarnation was entertained by some of the world's best minds outside of Christianity and before its time. This of itself would indicate that it is not irrational. That which Greek philosophy rejected was not the idea of incarnation, but the absurd and immoral forms under which it was conceived. It was the baseness, the impurity, the unworthi-

ness which gave rise to the scepticism of Euripides, and on the other hand we find Plato dwelling with religious enthusiasm on the incarnation of perfect virtue.

2. It is psychologically quite as possible that the Divine and the human should co-operate in one personality as that soul and body should be so united. Mind and matter are diverse in their essential nature, God and man only in plenitude and perfection of being.

3. The historic results of Christianity both in the race and in the individual demonstrate the wonderful moral and religious power of this faith, and so prove that it is in harmony with our religious nature. In fact many diverse forms of religion, false as well as true, unite in attesting the longing of the human heart for this unity with God.

We are now prepared to study in greater detail the contents of this mysterious faith, especially in its bearing upon our salvation. It was for us men and for our salvation that the Son of God became man. What does the Incarnation imply in itself? This is a question not so much of faith as growing out of faith. It is the effort of the human mind more clearly to define its faith. (1) Does it involve a change in the Divine Being or in His essential attributes? To this our faith in the immutability of God gives at once a negative reply. We cannot conceive of any such change, either by the intermixture of human attributes with the Divine, or by the

limitation of the Divine attributes to human finiteness. In that which forms alike the basis of the personality of the Father and the personality of the Son as well as that of the Spirit, the Divine Essence with its attributes, there can be no change. This the faith of the Church clearly affirms, unless there be a departure from it in the Lutheran doctrine of *communicatio idiomatum.* The modern theory of depotentiation seems also opposed to this faith. This view holds a κενωσις, a voluntary resignation of the conscious possession of the Divine attributes, a passing of the Divine personality through a zero point in the incarnation, so that the little babe in Bethlehem was conscious only of the human, and gradually resumed the Divine as the human was able to bear it, returning to the plenitude of His Divine attributes only on His ascension to glory. As the attempt is made to found this view directly on the language of Scripture, and hence to present it as a matter of religious faith and not of theological speculation, it becomes necessary to examine the New Testament expressions on this point. Three principal passages will suffice:

1. Phil. ii. 7: "But emptied himself, taking the form of a servant, being made in the likeness of men." If here we refer the expression "emptied himself" to the contents of consciousness, it would seem to teach depotentiation. It would mean the laying aside of the conscious possession as well as of the outward manifestation of the Divine attributes, only to resume them again as given by the

Father. But the passage may refer solely to the outward manifestation, and is generally so taken by English interpreters. If the following clauses "taking the form of a servant, being made in the likeness of men" are epexegetical, then the second interpretation is certainly correct; for in that case the whole passage refers, not to inner consciousness, but to manifest status or in the old English translations reputation. Paul is in this passage holding up our Lord as the model of the mind which denies itself for the good of others. But unconsciousness, utter oblivion of His Divine attributes, could not present such a sacrifice except once for all, and that before He became man. But full conscious possession of the Divine attributes, still bowing as a servant of the Father to all human infirmity and suffering and death, does present such a sacrifice in its most sublime form. It is saying, not under compulsion of necessity, but out of the deepest consecration, "Thy will be done." The whole passage thus seems to give the best sense as referring to manifestation or exercise of Divine powers rather than to conscious possession.

2. In Heb. ii. 9-14 we think the true idea is not a change of the Divine to any lower grade of being, but a change to an inferior station before the universe. The same person in continuous conscious being is made a little lower than the angels, and then crowned with glory and honour. So also the phrase, "partook of the same," expresses rather a continuous identity than a

transition to what to consciousness would be equivalent to cessation of being.

3. The third passage, "The Word was made" (or became) "flesh and dwelt among us," also implies the same continuous consciousness, and expresses nothing more than a change of form or sphere of life. The eternal Word takes to himself the form and life of man.

It thus appears quite unnecessary to assume the depotentiation theory so far as New Testament statements go. The faith there expressed does not seem to include or to demand for its explanation any such metaphysical conception. On the contrary, it rather seems to be excluded. Nor does the theory at all diminish the mystery of the incarnation in itself or make it more acceptable to reason. It is quite as easy to conceive of the Divine person taking into himself, *i.e.* into his consciousness the life of man in all its essential experiences from the cradle to the grave as an addition to his eternal fulness of existence, as to conceive the Divine consciousness resigning its own activity, passing in effect out of consciousness, becoming oblivious of itself, in order that it may be reconstructed under the limitations of human development.

The consideration of this theory has in part anticipated our second question—

2. Does the Incarnation involve a change in the personality of the Second Person? To answer this question we must return for a moment to the essential idea or to the definition of per-

sonality. We find it in that continuous self-conscious intelligence and will out of which a spiritual being acts. Self-consciousness in the entire exercise of its being is necessary to personality. Identity or continuity of this consciousness of self is the other essential element. It thus gathers up into conscious unity of being all the acts and states in which that personal being is manifested.

We are thus led to distinguish the continuous identical personality from the ever-varying acts and states which it claims as its own, and thus identifies with itself. They are not so much the personality as the manifestation of its activity, or its relation to environment, and so the content of its self-consciousness. These acts and states may arise from more than one nature. We are ourselves composed of soul and body, mind and matter; and yet these are so related to each other that the activities of both, as well as the results of their varying relations to environment, come forth in one self-conscious personality. I can be conscious of the movement of my arms, and at the same time of the purpose for which they were moved. In fact, our difficulty lies not so much in the conception of the personality of two or more elements united in one person as in the idea of a personality of one element or essence alone. We have no experience of the personality of disembodied spirit; and the antithesis of soul and body, as well as of the me and not me, enter so deeply into our human personality that some have

been disposed to deny the possibility of conscious personality apart from the body. This question, already considered under the personality of God, need not be resumed here. Whatever may be the content or character of a purely spiritual personality, it is certain that the human personality gives us direct knowledge of personality as uniting different elements of being in one personal life.

Turning now to the question of the relation of the Divine person to the incarnation, in the two fundamental elements of personality, self-consciousness, and identity or continuity, inasmuch as these spring directly from essential spiritual being and its attributes, again the faith of the Church affirms that there can be no change. The Christ is not a new person, but the eternal Son of God —the same identical person from eternity and in time. So St John quotes our Lord Himself: "O Father, glorify Thou me with Thine own self, with the glory which I had with Thee before the world was." The personality is here identical and continuous.

There thus remains but one answer to our original question, what is implied in the incarnation, and with this answer all the direct statements of the gospel narratives seem to agree. The answer is this: The incarnation implies the taking up into the Divine personal consciousness of new content, consisting of all those acts and states which are the natural outcome of humanity. The simple gospel narratives plainly affirm these of Him: He ate; He slept; He was hungry,

thirsty, weary; He was sorrowful, was pained, was grieved or angry, rejoiced. He loved His friends, and sympathised with their sorrows. All human states and acts contingent to His particular life are attributed to Him, sin only excepted. This does not imply a change in the eternal or Divine personality, or a diminution of its contents in their infinite plenitude of being, but the adding of the finite to the infinite, which is not thereby increased. It is not a break in the continuity of the eternal, but the flowing into it of the finite, which adds not thereto but only gives it human form. How the infinite Divine and the finite human can coexist in the same consciousness in their seeming opposition we cannot tell. Infinite blessedness and human pain, infinite power and human weakness, infinite knowledge and human not knowing,—these and many other such opposites we cannot bring together in our conceptions, and yet they are contrasted rather than contradictory. And we see in the recorded facts and acts of His life that both are there—the infinite after the manner of God, who hideth Himself; the finite after the manner of man, who is seen and known. The antithesis is not a contradiction. This faith of the Church in Christ as God incarnate thus implies—

1. That Deity is capable of stooping to our finite humanity.

2. That humanity is capable of being lifted to unity with Deity.

3. That such unity actually took place in time

in a supernaturally prepared humanity in the person of Jesus Christ: Matt. i. 20; Luke i. 35.

What is the relation of this incarnation to the salvation which God hath prepared for the race? The positive answer to this question we shall consider under the head of the Atonement. We shall there find that it forms the foundation both in natural and moral law for that work. At this point we shall only consider another and modern view of the incarnation as in itself that which completes the work of human salvation.

In the language of one school of modern theology, the incarnation becomes itself the at-one-ment, as the unity, in the person of Christ, of God with man and of man with God. The Divine nature has lifted the human up into union and communion with itself. In and through Christ we are all made partakers of the Divine nature; and so in a higher and more perfect sense than that of creation, made sons of God as Christ Himself was the Son of God, the first begotten. Accompanying this is a strong emphasis upon the revelation of God in Christ, especially of His nature as love, and of His relation to His whole spiritual creation as our Father in Heaven.

This view, which we do not attempt to analyse or to define after any one thinker, is perhaps rather a tendency than a defined system. It may be related to a scheme of moral development for humanity largely ignoring sin and the fall, or it may regard this work as in itself the

restoration of the sinful and fallen race in Christ as their representative.

But although this view may express much truth under a beautiful analogy, it fails to give full force to the ethical elements of religion, and, like all pantheistic or semi-pantheistic systems, it loses the ethical in the natural which here becomes the mystical. It even obscures the doctrine of the incarnation itself, and in its effort to exalt humanity to God, it gives us a less distinct conception of the true deity of Christ.

It is not practically far removed from another and older view which in the language of the older theology magnified the prophetic office of Christ while it obscured or ignored the priestly, and was the outcome of a view which entirely denied the deity of Christ and the doctrine of incarnation.

We therefore regard the incarnation in the New Testament, not as in itself the atonement or reconciliation, but as a necessary step toward its accomplishment. It does indeed occupy a most prominent place in the living faith of the Christian, but always as a Divine act of humiliation, of merciful condescension, leading to salvation. Still more prominent in religious faith as expressed in the New Testament is the death of the incarnate Son of God. This is clearly the central point, the distinctive object to which the living faith of all the ages of Christianity is turned. "Far be it from me to glory save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, through which

the world hath been crucified to me and I unto the world."

It is this which our theology has distinctively called the Atonement; and to this as an object of Christian faith we now turn.

CHAPTER V

THE ATONEMENT

WHY did the Son of God become man? The old answer of the creeds is "For us and for our sins"; St John's, "God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son that whosoever believeth on Him should not perish but have everlasting life." The redemption of fallen man from sin is the purpose of the incarnation as set forth in the faith of the New Testament.

We have seen that in all the earlier revelation of redemption, two elements were united, repentance and the forgiveness of sins. These two are fundamental. Men must be turned away from sin, and the guilt of the past must be removed. Unless we have both these we have no salvation; the preparatory dispensations all provided means whereby men might be led to repentance and receive remission of sins, with symbolic ordinances for the expression of both.

As in the line of Messianic prophecy we have the preparation for the coming of Christ among men as the King in His Kingdom, so in these preliminary provisions of salvation for men we have the preparation for the perfect work of Him who was "exalted a Prince and a Saviour to grant re-

pentance unto Israel and remission of sins." The moral and religious consciousness of men has in all ages borne witness to the fact that sin separates us from God. This is not a teaching of Christianity alone; it is a universal consciousness of humanity, expressed in all the great religions in so far as they are religions and not mere political systems. Some trace of its influence appears even in the lowest fetichism. If therefore religion would reunite man to God, sin must be taken away; and the means by which it is proposed to accomplish this constitute the true character of the religion. If Christianity presents to man a new object of religious faith in the incarnate Son of God, it so presents Him as redeeming man from sin, and thus Christ's redemption of the world from sin forms the central idea of Christianity. This redemption is wrought out through the Atonement which is the sequel to the incarnation as well as its purpose. The essential and universal idea which we now express by atonement is propitiation for sin. It implies that God is angry at sin, an idea from which we must not shrink, though we must not degrade it to the level of human selfish passion. The deepest intuitions of our moral and religious nature reveal to us this wrath of God. If there is any truth in religious faith or in moral conviction, this wrath is a fearful reality and expresses the eternal opposition of God to all sin. Atonement is that by which God's wrath may be averted, not from the sin,

but from the sinner; and if wrath against sin is an attribute of the Divine perfection, to avert wrath from the sinner must be at the same time to separate him from his sin.

The religious faith which thus can only be satisfied when it has found a true atonement for sin is founded in the convictions of our moral nature. It demands as the only possible way to the forgiving mercy of a holy God, an expiation for sin, and a propitiation for the sinner.

It has been usual to consider this whole subject from the forensic point of view. God is regarded sometimes as moral Governor, sometimes as Judge, and the sinner as guilty before His bar, or under sentence for his sin. Of course, an analogy of this kind may be readily constructed, and in a tropical way and to a limited extent it is used in the New Testament by St Paul who was familiar with Roman law. But the terms atonement, expiation, and propitiation are all purely religious, and quite alien to the field of jurisprudence. Religious forms of expression are also predominantly used of this work of Christ in the New Testament even by St Paul. If, therefore, our inductive method of appeal to religious faith and especially to the religious faith of the New Testament be the true one, in seeking the materials of our theology we shall throughout abide by religious and moral rather than by forensic considerations. In considering this subject we must think of God in His divinity of perfection and relation as God, and not under the imperfect and

human analogy of a governor, judge, or king. Again, that which the atonement brings to us from God is first and foremost the forgiveness of sins. Our religious faith seeks forgiveness of sins through Christ; "If any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous: and He is the propitiation for our sins; not for ours only, but also for the whole world." This simple idea of forgiveness of sins, which is a Divine act since none can forgive sins but God only, must not be confused with human forensic acts, if we wish to grasp the truly religious conception of the propitiation by which forgiveness comes. By the atonement we understand that act or work of our Lord Jesus Christ centering in His death, whereby the forgiveness of sins becomes possible to a holy God and for sinful men.

In all religions of the ancient world we find some form of atonement for sin, something which men regard as an expiation before God. The greater the moral power of the religion the more prominent does this expiation become. In the Mosaic religion with its clearly defined consciousness of moral obligation, expiation filled a very large place. Every transgression even of ceremonial law had its expiation; and the laws of atonement and holiness were the very centre of the Levitical system. Atonement is thus not only an important and central element in religion, but it is like the idea of God an element by which the religion is largely characterised. In fact theology may be written from the atonement

as its centre, since in the true atonement for sin we have the most perfect revelation of God Himself.

For our Lord's atoning work the incarnation lays the foundation. This it does both in its relation to God as the result of His purpose and loving command, and in its relation to man by bringing the Son of God into our nature with its moral and natural relations to sin. The first relation lays the foundation for the moral power of the atonement. It is the outcome of the love of God to sinful men, and hence brings all the force of infinite love to bear on man to draw him back from sin to God. The second meets our sense of guilt; it is an offering and sacrifice made in our nature and on our behalf to God in virtue of which God is faithful and just to forgive sin. This is the atonement and at-one-ment in its two fundamental aspects, both of which recognise a moral separation from God, a separation by sin in which we are estranged from God, our minds at enmity with God, and God is angry with us with a just wrath.

This work we must study as a fact clearly set forth in the New Testament, a fact upon which the spiritual life, *i.e.* the living faith of the Christian Church is founded, in fact the central fact in Christianity, and yet a fact apprehended not by sense or by reason, but by living faith through the revealing of the Holy Ghost. This revelation is made in the heart of every living Christian. But it was made first of all in the hearts of the Apostles themselves; and when

Christ was thus made to them wisdom and righteousness and sanctification and redemption, they so set Him forth to the faith of a sinful world. But even before this revelation in the hearts of His disciples the consciousness of His work in its relation both to God and man must have been in the mind of Christ Himself, perhaps not after the limited logical definitions of our theology, but as an infinite love to God and man, giving Himself in suffering and death to save the world. Such consciousness must surely have found expression, and that expression have been remembered beyond all other words which fell from His lips, and have entered into the very heart of the living faith of the Church. The most important end of study must therefore be to apprehend this work in the light of its fixed statement by our Lord and His Apostles. We thus limit ourselves to the New Testament study of the subject, not because it does not appear in the Old Testament, but first, because the New Testament statements refer directly and primarily to the work of Christ, the statements of the Old Testament to the sacrificial and prophetic types by which it was foreshadowed, and the way for its apprehension prepared; secondly, because the fulfilment is more easily understood than the prophecy, the fully developed faith than that which is as yet only in germ. We therefore cultivate both brevity and certainty by adopting this method.

This study must be pursued in the spirit of a

living faith; here above all points in theology the light of the revealing Spirit is needed. It is emphatically the apprehension of faith which gives us our material here. It is as a religious faith that we are to study the atonement, a faith founded in the words and death of our Lord, and set forth by His Apostles as the living faith of their own hearts. Our object must be to apprehend this faith in its completeness.

1. In its relation to the moral constitution under which it is possible.

2. In itself, the act or work by which atonement is effected, its moral quality, its valency or force as an atonement.

3. In its relation to human probation and salvation.

The Moral Constitution under which Atonement is possible.

This is very clearly set forth by St Paul in the fifth chapter of Romans, verses 12-19 inclusive: "Therefore, as through one man sin entered into the world, and death through sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all sinned: for until the law sin was in the world, but sin is not imputed when there is no law. Nevertheless, death reigned from Adam until Moses, even over them that had not sinned after the likeness of Adam's transgression, who is a figure of him that was to come. But not as the trespass, so also is the free gift, for if by the trespass of the one the many died,

much more did the grace of God, and the gift by the grace of the one man, Jesus Christ, abound unto the many. And not as through one that sinned, so is the gift; for the judgment came of one unto condemnation, but the free gift came of many trespasses unto justification. For if, by the trespass of the one, death reigned through the one; much more shall they that receive the abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness reign in life through the one, even Jesus Christ. So then as through one trespass the judgment came unto all men unto condemnation; even so through one act of righteousness the free gift came unto all men to justification of life. For as through the one man's disobedience the many were made sinners, even so through the obedience of one shall the many be made righteous."

Many other passages touch upon or harmonize with the ideas here presented, but as this is the most direct and complete statement, we will formulate our doctrine from it.

1. It sets forth as a fact that it is possible for the whole race to be affected for evil or for good, for sin or for salvation, by the act of one member of that race.

This implies (*a*) a moral unity of the race; (*b*) a united or common responsibility as distinguished from individual responsibility.

In proof of this common responsibility Paul cites the fact that it has taken effect even where individual responsibility was not fully developed

(verses 13, 14). It thus precedes and underlies our individual responsibility. This law of our moral constitution which makes the whole responsible for the individual act, appears not merely in this statement of one case by St Paul, but in the whole experience of human life. We find humanity everywhere presenting itself in these moral unities. The family is the fundamental unity. Any one of its members may bring untold blessing or woe upon the whole. This responsibility especially, though not exclusively, devolves upon the parents. The children suffer for the sins of the parents or they are blessed by their virtues. Our whole law of inheritance is based upon it, and thus our jurisprudence recognises its essential justice. But these moral unities appear in wider circles. The village, the community, the tribe, the city, the nation, are all examples extending the law until we are prepared by the facts of history to accept Paul's statement that the "transgression of one man brought judgment (penal consequences) upon all" the race, and that "through the righteousness of one a free gift came to all" the race. This passage implies (*c*) that in the history of mankind there actually has been a probation of the race as a race, based upon this moral unity and common responsibility, as well as a probation of each individual, and that this probation of the race is not only a continuous fact in the moral judgments of history, but had its definite historical result at the very origin of the race, in conse-

quence of which well-known penal results have descended to the whole race. It is on the basis of this law that he also affirms a second great probational event in the history of the race, out of which shall flow the world's salvation. The law of moral unity of common responsibility and of race probation is thus clearly established as a fact, both by this scriptural statement and by the observation of history, and its justice is recognised by the common consent of mankind.

One or two points of error, however, must be guarded against in our application and interpretation of this law.

1. It must not be so extended as to destroy individual probation. Paul, who is for us the chief expounder of this law, also teaches as the fundamental law of individual probation, "Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap" (Gal. vi. 7). So in the Epistle to the Romans i. 18-21 and ii. 29: "For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold down the truth in unrighteousness; because that which may be known of God is manifest in them, for God manifested it unto them. For the invisible things of Him since the creation of the world are clearly seen, being perceived through the things that are made, even His everlasting power and divinity; that they may be without excuse: because that knowing God, they glorified Him, not as God, neither gave thanks." Here is a most complete exposition of universal individual respon-

sibility and probation, which is not destroyed by any advantageous or adverse temporal conditions.

2. Upon this individual probation alone eternal consequences are made to depend. Romans ii. 6-10: "Who will render to every man according to his works: to them that by patience in well-doing seek for glory and honour and incorruption, eternal life: but unto them that are factious, and obey not the truth, but obey unrighteousness, shall be wrath and indignation, tribulation and anguish, upon every soul of man that worketh evil, of the Jew first, and also of the Greek; but glory and honour and peace to every man that worketh good, to the Jew first and also to the Greek; for there is no respect of persons with God." In no single case is the race probation spoken of as the direct cause of eternal penalty to the individual. This is always and everywhere referred to the individual responsibility and probation. The consequences which flow from race probation belong to this life. They may largely affect the advantages or disadvantages of individual probation, but they are never spoken of as absolutely determining the individual probation, or supplanting or eliminating it. Notwithstanding Adam's sin or Christ's righteousness, each man must give account of himself to God, and for his own sin or good works be judged for eternity. The law of race responsibility is thus limited by the law of individual responsibility, and finally merges into it. The race probation

prepares for, lays the foundation of, and makes way for the final individual responsibility.

These are the facts of the case recognised in Scripture, evident in history, and acknowledged by the common conscience of the race.

3. In studying the penal consequences which follow from race responsibility, and to which the whole race are held, we must distinguish clearly between natural and moral law. Natural law may be founded in moral law, and may give effect to moral law, but it does not thereby become moral law. Natural law is an order of cause and effect operated by the forces of nature; moral law is an order of right, operated by the principles of justice. The operation of a natural law may be counteracted by the force of nature upon which it depends; that of a moral law, only by the principle of justice upon which it depends. A natural law, by the aid of which effect is given to a moral law, may be suspended, and yet the moral law itself remain in full force in other ways. In the same way a natural law, by which effect is given to a moral law, may have a much wider scope than this particular moral end which it serves in this particular case. Heredity and death are both natural laws used in giving effect to a moral law in the probation of the race, but not to be confounded with the moral law itself. The bearing of this upon the doctrine of the Atonement will appear presently. We have not delayed to consider the justice of this moral constitution in itself. It has already been somewhat discussed

under the doctrine of responsibility. It is, certainly, a fact in human life. It is, we think, sufficiently approved as God's right order by a consideration of the wonderful blessings which flow from it. It is the foundation of all the altruistic virtues. Every man under it becomes his brother's keeper. Individual responsibility without it could not attain its most God-like development. If it made the fall possible, it also made possible salvation. If it has entailed a long heritage of ills, it has raised up a countless army of workers, together with Christ, in saving others even by dying themselves. The fact that man's sin turns it into a curse cannot reflect upon the great and wise and good intent and glorious final result of the purpose of God.

The passage upon which we have based our study of the moral constitution of the race sets forth two supreme events in the race probation. One is the sin of the first man, in consequence of which penal consequences rest upon the whole race. The other is the work of Christ, in consequence of which redemption comes to the race. This last we must now consider.

The Work of Christ by which Atonement is effected.

This is clearly set forth in the New Testament under various forms of expression. We naturally first of all turn to the words of our Lord Himself. It was after He had commenced to show to His disciples that He must be crucified, and the third

day rise again; that in setting before them the true way of spiritual greatness, He urges them each to the life of self-denying service, setting before them His own example in these words:—"Even as the Son of Man came, not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give His life a ransom for many." His redeeming work is here presented as a life of service, terminated by the giving of His life. This work is here founded on the incarnation: He came for this purpose, and it is linked in with the law of moral unity, by which we all serve one another, and are members one of another. Again, at the institution of the great central ordinance of Christianity, our Lord speaks still more definitely of His redeeming work: "He took a cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, Drink ye all of it; for this is my blood of the Covenant, which is shed for many unto remission of sins." As St Mark tells us, this solemn institution in remembrance of His death was made immediately after He had once more warned His disciples of the near approach of this event. The blood of the Covenant could therefore be no other than His own blood, shortly to be shed.

To this record must be added the words recorded by St Luke, spoken after the resurrection: "That the Christ should suffer, and rise again from the dead the third day; and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name unto all the nations, beginning from Jerusalem."

These words all set forth the suffering life and

the death of our Lord as constituting that to which the faith of a sinful world should be turned for forgiveness of sins. This was to Christ's own thought the crowning act of moral glory, the thing to be continually remembered by His followers, the necessary work for the Christ, and the basis upon which remission of sins was to be preached unto all the nations.

Let us now take a passage from Heb. ii. 14-17, showing how His followers in the Apostolic Age interpreted His words, and expressed their own faith for salvation: "Since then the children are sharers in flesh and blood, He also Himself in like manner took part of the same; that through death He might bring to nought him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; and might deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage. For verily not of angels doth He take hold, but He taketh hold of the seed of Abraham. Wherefore it behoved Him in all things to be made like unto His brethren that He might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people." This passage, again, clearly sets forth the death of our Lord as the central fact in the work of redemption; it also clearly states the necessity of the incarnation, both for the redemption or deliverance of man, and for that of atonement or propitiation toward God. It goes even further: it makes the incarnation the necessary preliminary to that death by which the power of death is to be overthrown. Both aspects

of the law of moral unity or solidarity are thus applied to Christ and His work. He must be made like unto His brethren in all things, in order that He may be their faithful and merciful high priest. Only by entering into the solidarity of the race can He help and save the race. But under the same law, by becoming one with us, and by making us, in this sense, His brethren, He becomes liable to our liabilities as a race. All the consequences (sin only excepted) expressed by Paul in that sentence, "In Adam all die," and again, "By one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin," pass over to him. It is thus that the incarnation is here spoken of as His taking part in "flesh and blood," the mortal elements of our nature, because in this way the death comes to Him by which He destroys him that had the power of death.

Another important statement of the supreme act by which Christ redeems the world, and in which it is set forth in all its steps from the pre-existent glory with the Father to the final mediatorial glory on the throne of the universe is found in Phil. ii. 6-11. This passage like Matt. xx. 28, begins in a setting forth of the life of highest moral glory. The Church is exhorted to love unity and humility, all expressed in "not looking each of you to his own things," the selfish individual life, "but each of you also to the things of others," the altruistic life. Of this Christ Himself gives us the supreme example in the very work of redemption itself. "Who being in the

form of God counted it not a prize (a thing to be seized or held fast as a booty), to be on an equality with God, but emptied himself, taking the form of a servant, being made in the likeness of men; and being found in fashion as a man, He humbled Himself, becoming obedient even unto death, yea the death of the Cross. Wherefore also God highly exalted Him and gave unto Him the name which is above every name; that in the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven and things on earth and things under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father."

In this remarkable passage the work of Christ, as it appeared to the religious faith of St Paul, is set forth both in its successive steps and in the moral character from which springs its power and its glory.

1. It begins with an estate of pre-existent glory spoken of here as being in the form of God, and being on an equality with God; and, in John xvii. 5, as the glory which He had with the Father before the world was.

2. A resignation of this glorious estate, expressed here by the words, "he emptied himself," and elsewhere by St Paul, "Though He was rich yet for your sakes He became poor that ye through His poverty might become rich."

3. Entrance upon a life of service; "taking the form of a servant;" expressed again by our Lord Himself, "The Son of Man came not to be ministered unto but to minister."

4. It is to this end that He becomes man; "The Word became flesh and dwelt among us full of grace and truth."

5. Being found in fashion as a man, He humbles Himself and becomes obedient to all human obligation, of which Matthew gives a single illustration recording his own words at baptism, "Thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness."

6. This obedience is carried "even unto death, yea the death of the cross," the extreme form of death as the penalty of sin. And so again His own words attest, "The cup which the Father hath given Me shall I not drink it?" and again, "Nevertheless not My will but Thine be done."

Thus these passages centre the redeeming work unmistakably in His death upon the Cross. The same appears from all those passages which speak of Christ as giving or offering Himself for us, and those which speak of His giving offering and laying down His life for us. By the side of these may be placed those which speak of redemption through His blood the sprinkling of His blood, and to these may be added His own words, "My blood of the Covenant." In accord with this we see the shadow of the cross hanging over Him as He approaches the end and to this all the evangelists give testimony.

With the historic fact thus clearly defined before us, we must next turn to consider this redeeming and atoning work in its moral character. As preparatory to this we must

note that it is a bearing of the penalty of human sin. The passages in which this is asserted are peculiarly important as linking His sufferings with the law of human responsibility, and distinguishing them from the sufferings of a martyr or witness for the truth. They are the following: Heb. ix. 28; 1 Peter ii. 24; iii. 18; 1 Cor. xv. 3; Rom. iv. 25, but especially Gal. iii. 10-14. "For as many as are of the law are under a curse: for it is written, Cursed is everyone which continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law, to do them. Now that no man is justified by the law in the sight of God, is evident; for, the righteous shall live by faith; and the law is not of faith; but he that doeth them shall live in them. Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law, having become a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is everyone that hangeth on a tree; that upon the Gentiles might come the blessing of Abraham in Christ Jesus; that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith." The curse is the penalty of broken law (v. 10). "Christ became a curse" on our behalf, "for us."

It is going beyond the legitimate force of these passages to contend that Christ suffered the penalty of any individual sin, or of the personal sins of any individual man, or the united penalties of the sins of all men, or of any class of men, or the equivalent for these penalties, or the anger of God, or the torments of the lost. There is not

the remotest reference to any of these things in any of these passages. On the other hand, God with this Son declares Himself as always well pleased, never more so than when He was fulfilling the will of the Father by obeying unto death even the death of the Cross. If we are asked what then is the meaning of Gethsemane and the cry of Calvary we turn to Heb. v. 7-9: "Who in the days of His flesh, having offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto Him that was able to save Him from death, and having been heard for His godly fear, though He was a Son, yet learned obedience by the things which He suffered; and having been made perfect, He became unto all them that obey Him the author of eternal salvation." He was truly man. As a man He felt all the bitterness of death in its most cruel form. As a man He needed to be saved out of death. Even though the Son of God yet was He disciplined in obedience (as all men are under our moral order) by the things which He suffered. He suffered death, the universal penalty of sin appointed to all men in this life, nothing more, but nothing less. He tasted death for every man. Not "in our stead," for the preposition can scarcely be held in sound scholarship to have that significance, certainly not to be limited to it, but "*on our behalf*." Those who think that this is not enough have never realized what it is for man to die.

This supreme act of Christ by which He makes atonement for our sins thus stands forth as an

act of obedience to God's law in submitting to death as the penalty of sin imposed upon a sinful race with whom He had voluntarily made Himself one for their salvation. The act thus takes on a moral and religious character. It is an act taking place not under natural but under moral law, a voluntary act performed under the impulse of the highest moral motives, and a religious act as the will of God is its supreme end and it is done in loving and obedient relation to Him. In this moral and religious character this act presents itself to the faith of the New Testament writers as follows :—

1. As an act or work of infinite charity or love. It is love to all sinners: "For the love of Christ constraineth us," because we thus judge that one died for all. It is love to His Church, His own, His friends: "Christ also loved the Church and gave Himself up for it." "Having loved His own which were in the world, He loved them unto the end"; "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends." It is love to each individual man, for He "loved me and gave Himself up for me." It is infinite love, "the love of Christ which passeth knowledge."

2. It is this love obeying the infinite love of the Father. "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on Him should not perish, but have eternal life," and this Son declares, "My meat is to do the will of Him that sent Me, and to

accomplish His work." And again, "I am come down from heaven, not to do Mine own will, but the will of Him that sent Me." In this way "God commendeth His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us"; "not that we loved God, but that He loved us, and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins."

3. It is love making infinite sacrifice to fulfil this love and yield this obedience. We have already quoted 2 Cor. viii. 9 and Phil. ii. 5, etc., expressing Paul's religious faith on this point. To this we need only add our Lord's own words, "I lay down My life for the sheep."

4. It is love sacredly fulfilling all law. At the very outset of His ministry He says, "Thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness." In the very heart of the sermon on the mount we read, "Think not that I came to destroy the law and the prophets. I came not to destroy, but to fulfil." As He passes to the cross His last words were, "O my Father, if this cannot pass away except I drink it, Thy will be done."

It is thus the world's supreme work of righteousness, including every element which goes to make up the beauty of holiness as the highest and greatest thing in the universe, and as infinitely precious before God.

We now come to the greatest question, "Wherein lies the power of this work as an atonement before God, as the propitiation for our sins? How does it make it possible for God to forgive sin?"

First, note carefully what is to be accomplished

by the atonement. It is not simply the remission of penalty. It is not the allowing of the sinner to escape punishment. It is true forgiveness. It is the bringing of the sinner back to his place in the heart of God. It is God's receiving him again as His child. Read the 15th of St Luke for Christ's own presentation of this. The atonement must make it possible for God to forgive sins.

Again, this does not imply that there is not in the heart of God the grace, the love which desires to receive the lost child back. This is the very fountain-head of the atonement, "God so loved the world." But it does imply that there is a bar, something which hinders God's love from taking effect. Now this bar must be either—

(*a*) In man the sinner, who will not, or cannot, be reconciled to God because he chooses to remain in sin; or,

(*b*) In the necessities of the moral government of God, whose authority must be maintained over the creatures who have not sinned; or,

(*c*) In the nature of God Himself, who, because He is holy and just, cannot forgive sin without atonement. In other words, the atonement must enable God to be "just and the justifier of him that believeth" (Rom. iii. 26).

We do not hesitate to accept the latter as the only possible final ground of the necessity of the atonement, first, on the basis of the passage of Scripture just quoted; and again, because in the ultimate analysis both the other grounds must resolve themselves into this.

1. Why should the persistence of the sinner in his sins be a bar to forgiveness? Either because God, as holy and just, cannot receive such into His favour, or because to do so would undermine the authority of His government. The first then necessarily falls into the second or third.

2. But why should the government of God be undermined by the forgiveness of the sinner either penitent or impenitent? Either because it indicates a lack of power in God to punish, or because it indicates a lack of disposition. In the first case, the authority of God's government would rest on fear, a position which cannot be accepted by those who believe with St John that God is love. In the second case, the authority would be undermined because of lack of disposition, *i.e.* of justice, of inflexible will to do right. That is, God's government would be undermined because injustice would be done, and it is maintained, not as a matter of expedience, but of right. If, then, we believe in right as an eternal and primary principle in God, and do not regard it as a secondary thing, a wise form of goodness, then in this lies the final bar to forgiveness, and the atonement must make it *right* for God to forgive sin. If it is right, then it cannot shake the throne of God founded on the right.

How does the work of Christ make it right for God to forgive sin? Our question, as thus carried back, excludes for answer all moral influence theories of the atonement. Moral influence expresses the relation of the atonement to man,

most important in its own place. We are asking, "What is its relation to God in His own attributes, especially in His attribute of justice, and to that attribute as ultimate, *i.e.* viewing things as right in virtue of their own character, and not merely of certain consequences. If the penalty of sin and the condemnation of the sinner are simply expedients for the maintenance of government, then maintain the authority of government in some other way and you may dispense with them. But if they are of eternal equity,

How does the Atonement secure Equity in the Pardon of the Sinner?

The underlying principle of the various attempts to answer this question will appear in three examples:

1. Anselm says sin robs God of His just honour. The atonement pays back this honour to God as it would have been paid back had we ourselves suffered the penalty.

2. Later on, the Calvinistic theologians developed this into the substitutionary theory. Christ suffered the exact penalty or the equivalent for the penalty of the sins of the elect, and hence they are released.

3. Finally by the use of an analogy or metaphor this was converted into the commercial view of the atonement. Sin is a debt. Christ paid the debt. We are released.

Before investigating the scriptural foundations

of these answers we may submit them to analysis to see whether they really supply what we need.

1. Anselm's view finds the guilt of sin in that it robs God. But is that its full guilt? Is not the right, that moral equity which is in God and in all His works, the very principle which demands that amends should be made to God's honour? The evil of sin is more than the violation of personal right even of God. It is the violation of an eternal principle in God and in all His works. That principle not only enjoins the right and forbids the wrong, but it attaches to right its equitable reward, and to wrong its equitable penalty, not as an expedient, but as "a matter of right." Now, that which right demands is not that the wrong be repaid (that it does demand wherever possible, but here it may be impossible), but that a new right be carried into effect, viz., *the equity of penalty*. It was this phase of the problem which developed the substitution theory of the reformers. They held that in the satisfaction of the penalty of justice, the suffering of penalty may be transferred to a substitute. If the substitute suffers the penalty, then the original transgressor may go free. The principle upon which this view is based is not materially altered, whether we consider the penalty as identical or as equivalent in value. In either case it is held that satisfaction is made, the debt is paid.

It has been objected to this view, and very properly, that it involves a moral impossibility if taken in its extreme form of identical penalty.

The penal consequences of sin are thus defined in the Shorter Catechism: "All mankind by their fall lost communion with God, are under His wrath and curse and so made liable to all the miseries of this life, to death itself, and to the pains of hell forever." With this catalogue before us the point seems well taken that it is impossible that Christ should have suffered all this. The greater part of those who hold this view in consequence fall back upon some form of equivalence.

2. But it is again objected that the very principle of substitution, instead of satisfying justice, violates justice; that guilt consists essentially of two elements, the *culpa* or obligation to penalty, and the *poena* or penalty itself; that while the latter may be transferred, the former in moral delinquency is personal and cannot be transferred; another cannot become blameworthy for my sin, and as the bond of justice which attaches penalty to sin lies in the blameworthiness, that bond cannot be satisfied, will not attach itself, even though another suffer the penalty; that in this respect there is an essential difference between sin and a debt. Another may place himself under obligation in justice for my debt. He cannot do so for my crime, except by becoming *particeps criminis*, and even then it is his own part in the crime for which he is responsible. Even in human law, where relative justice and the prevention of crime are the objects sought, this principle is not admitted in relation to crime, although freely applied to debt. Much

less then could it apply in Divine law where absolute justice is demanded.

3. It is objected to this principle that if valid at all it secures not forgiveness conditioned on penitence and faith, but absolute discharge. This was freely accepted by the reformers who held that this substitution taking place only on behalf of the elect, absolute discharge was secured; and that regeneration, justification, and sanctification were but the effectual operations by which the discharge was to be carried into effect, like the opening of the doors and the knocking off of the chains of the prisoners.

But while this objection is thus not absolutely fatal in Calvinistic theology, it is so in Arminian. We see no way in which the principle of substitution can be applied except as involving the absolute security of those for whom it is made. Forgiveness is no longer forgiveness, but legal discharge, under this conception. This is not what is required in atonement, *but a propitiation*, that is, righteous motive to, or reason for, *forgiveness*. It would thus seem that under the force of these two objections the substitutionary view must fall to the ground as failing to meet two essential scriptural ideas, the satisfaction of Divine justice on the one hand, and a real Divine forgiveness conditioned on repentance and faith on the other. But insuperable as these objections appear, if Scripture sustained this view we should be forced to suspend judgment. But when we come to examine the scriptural foundation for it we

think it will be found to be far from satisfactory.

The view is, however, supposed to be sustained by three classes of New Testament passages: First, those which speak of Christ dying for us, suffering for us, etc. One of the most striking of these is 1 Peter iii. 18: "Because Christ also suffered for sins once, the righteous for the unrighteous, that He might bring us to God." The idea of substitution in this and all similar passages is supposed to be in the preposition here used ὑπερ. But the preposition ὑπερ does not necessarily imply anything as to the manner of carrying the work into effect. It does assert that the *benefit* or *advantage* of the work of "the righteous" accrues to "the unrighteous." But it is reading into it more than its legitimate force to make it say that such benefit is further secured by an act in which the benefactor takes the place of the benefited. In the only two passages in the New Testament in which ὑπερ was translated "instead of," viz., 2 Cor. v. 20, Phil. 13, the Revised Version has the more correct, "on behalf of." This does not imply any idea of substitution in person, but only in results or benefits.

Second, the next class of passages is that in which the preposition αντι is used. This is supposed to imply an absolute substitution. In this case no objection lies against the meaning assigned to the preposition. It certainly commonly signifies "instead of," "in the place of."

And if in the passage in St Peter just quoted, or in any similar passage, Christ had been said to have suffered or died, *αντι ημων*, substitutionary suffering would have been strongly asserted. But this preposition is used only in three passages, and in all cases in the same connection of thought. These are Matt. xx. 28, Mark x. 45, and 1 Tim. ii. 6. If in the first two passages, which are in reality one saying of the Master, it had been said, "to give His life," or "to die," *αντι ημων*, then the substitutionary theory could be founded on the words. But that is not said, but this, "to give His life as a ransom price instead of the many"; the substitution is not of the person who gave his life, but of the act, or of the life given, as "a ransom price." It is the ransom price which, *for the purpose of deliverance*, takes the place of the person delivered.

The same idea appears in the passage, "Who gave himself a ransom price instead, *υπερ* ('on behalf of'), of all to be testified in due time." You note the difference in terms: in the first, *αντι* "instead of" "*the many*" (redeemed); in the last, "a ransom price" to take the place, not "of all," but "for the benefit of all." In all these passages the thought centres not on *an atonement offered to God*, but on *a redemption provided for man*. Christ's death is *the ransom price in our stead* as delivering us from sin, "*for the benefit of all*," but *instead of all that believe*.

The word "ransom" expresses exactly and beautifully the power of Christ's death toward

man. But its valency toward God is expressed by the word "propitiation," ἱλαστηριον, an entirely different idea, and we have no right to confuse the two, or to extend the figure of ransom beyond that which it directly illustrates, *our deliverance*. To ask to whom the ransom price was paid, is to carry the figure beyond its scriptural use.

We are therefore led to carry our question back once more to the New Testament for answer, and ask is there any light upon it? How does the work of Christ make it right or just for God to forgive sins? The answer can, we think, be found in the passages already quoted from Romans v. and Phil. ii.

In the first of these passages Paul is discussing this whole question, both of the fall and of the recovery of man, from the ethical or moral standpoint. This certainly touches both its relation to God and man. It is the ethical quality, the wrong in sin, which makes it mighty toward God and man. The ethical quality in sin Paul expresses by two words. First, related to moral law, it is "transgression"; second, related to God, "disobedience." So the ethical quality of Christ's work he expresses by two corresponding words. Toward moral law or principle, it is δικαιωμα, the fulfilment of law, that which it prescribes; toward God it is "obedience." In transgression lies the condemning power of Adam's act; in righteousness, the restoring power of Christ's work; in disobedience, that which

offended God; in obedience, that which propitiates Him.

The other passage (Phil. ii. 6, etc.) sets forth the ethical side of the work of Christ as an example to us, and at the same moment as claiming from God the lofty dignity and right to the power which He exercises as Mediator. His mediatorial throne, His power on earth to forgive sins, is the just reward of His infinite self-sacrifice in obedience to the loving command of that Father who "so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son," who "sent His Son into the world not to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved." It is in virtue of the merit of His work, its infinite desert, that remission of sins is preached through His name among all nations. It is after He had finished this work, even before He ascended into Heaven, that He Himself said, "All power is given unto Me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore and make disciples of all nations." To the same effect are the words of St Peter (Acts ii. 33, etc.). "Being therefore by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, He hath poured forth this which ye see and hear," *i.e.* the spirit of sonship upon man.

The sum, then, of these passages is this, that God the Father, in reward of the loving obedience, and self-sacrifice, and fulfilment of the claims of law, of His Son, grants Him as just reward the power to dispense the forgiveness of sins and

power to become the sons of God, in spite of the demerit of their sins, to all who believe in His name. It is not in virtue of individual substitutionary sacrifice, but in virtue of the merit of His obedience and loving self-sacrifice, and fulfilment of law, even by death, that God has placed Him in that position of supreme mediatorial power as our High Priest, in which He shall gather a company which no man can number, out of every people and tribe and nation, and that the Father forgives the sins of these for His name's sake, and makes them sons and daughters of the Lord Almighty, heirs of God and joint-heirs with Christ.

To put it then in one word, it is not the suffering of an equivalent penalty which cancels sin, but the *merit* of a work of infinite *moral value*, which at once honours God by loving *obedience* to the command of His love, and *by laying down life at that command*, honours law by meeting its every *demand on Him as one with our race.* This makes it right for God, first, to enter into relations of mercy to the whole race, in whose nature and for whose sake this work was wrought; and second, to forgive and accept everyone who comes in His name for mercy.

In this way it is justice that satisfies justice. The higher justice not only counterweighs the lower, but lifts the scale in which the sinner stands weighted with his sins up to God and heaven. The link which binds the work of Christ then to God is the link of just reward.

? It is right to God *for Christ's sake* to forgive sins.

III. *The Relation of the Atonement to Man's Probation and Salvation.*

But we must now consider more fully the relation which binds us to Christ's work.

We have already seen how Christ in the moral order of our united nature bound Himself to us as a race by taking upon Him our nature. It was in virtue of this that He was called on to suffer the final penalty of the sinning race, *i.e.* death, and it is in virtue of this that He has opened up the mercy of God unconditionally to the whole race, and placed the whole race *on a new and gracious probation.* We have now to consider the terms of this probation, and how it carries us up into *a new and higher unity of humanity whose head is Christ*, and whose issues are eternal salvation. Before entering on this final relation of atonement, let us examine those Scriptures which set forth its unconditional benefits in the gracious probation of the entire sinful race :—

1. As an unconditional result of Christ's work there is a universal resurrection. 1 Cor. xv. 22 : "As in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive." This universal resurrection is for the purpose of judgment. "We must all appear before the *judgment seat of Christ*, that every one may receive the things done in the body, according to that he hath done whether it be good or bad" (2 Cor. v. 10). So also our Lord Him-

self. John v. 28, 29: "Marvel not at this for the hour cometh when all that are in the tombs shall hear *His voice* and shall come forth, they that have done good unto the resurrection of life, and they that have done ill unto the resurrection of judgment." The universal resurrection is thus directly subservient to *a universal probation under the mediatorial authority of Christ.*

2. As an unconditional result of the work of Christ, light comes to all men. John i. 9: "That was the true light which lighteth every man that cometh into the world." This light founds probation. John iii. 19: "This is the judgment that light is come into the world, and men love darkness rather than light, because their deeds are evil." Thus the work of Christ for our race provides the beginning and the ending of probation, universal light and universal judgment through that light.

3. Next we have in this work of Christ a universal provision of Divine grace. Titus ii. 12-14: "For the grace of God, saving for all men, hath been made manifest, instructing us" (*i.e.* giving us moral light and discipline) "in order that," etc. Here then we have in connection with the atonement *a saving course of probational life and grace provided for all men.*

4. Next, in accordance with universal gracious provision of probation, we have provision for possible salvation of every man. John iii. 16: "God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him

should not perish but have eternal life." So 1 John ii. 2; Heb. ii. 9; 1 Tim. ii. 6; Rom. v. 18, etc.

5. In accordance with this universal probation, and these provisions of light and grace and possible salvation, God wills and is working for the salvation of the world. 1 Tim. ii. 4; 2 Cor. v. 19: "This is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour; who willeth that all men should be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth. For there is one God, one mediator also between God and men, Himself man, Christ Jesus, who gave Himself a ransom for all; the testimony to be borne in its own times." "To wit, that God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself, not reckoning unto them their trespasses, and having committed unto us the word of reconciliation."

These are, according to Scripture, the universal provisions of the atonement, *i.e.* its results. Let us see how they correspond to the universal results of Adam's sin, and hence how they may spring directly and unconditionally by the law of race unity from the work of Christ in our nature and on our behalf.

(1) If universal death could come into the world as the result of the sin of one man, certainly, under the same law, and with equal or even greater justice, a universal resurrection may come as the result of the righteousness of one man.

(2) If darkness, moral blindness, has fallen

upon our world in Adam, surely truth, moral light, may come through Christ by the same law.

(3) If a law of sin in our members has come to all through Adam, a law of grace through the Holy Spirit may come through Christ (Acts ii. 17).

(4) If the sin of Adam brought the possibility of eternal condemnation to the whole world (Rom. v. 18), surely the righteousness of Christ may bring the possibility of salvation within the reach of all.

(5) If the sin of Adam brought in a reign of sin and death, so the work of Christ brings in a kingdom of grace and life (Rom. v. 21).

Finally, if the sin of Adam destroyed the conditions and possibilities of the original probation granted to the race, surely on the same law the work of Christ may lay the foundations of a new and gracious probation, under which men may rise to all the possibilities of their being.

We must now consider what that probation is, and how it is related to the atoning work of Christ.

Without entering into the nature of probation in general, which will be discussed in another chapter, it is sufficient to note the fact so fully declared in Scripture, that the condition of the new probation is *faith* (John iii. 18 ; Acts x. 43 ; Rom. iii. 21, 26). Here the Lord Himself, speaking through John, and Peter and Paul unite. If at times repentance on the one side as the preparation for this faith, and baptism on the other as

the profession of this faith, are associated with it, it is only as the perfecting of faith that they are so presented. Faith is the essential condition of the Christian probation.

Again, this faith is personally in Christ. The personal Saviour is the centre and object and foundation of this faith. Our Lord Himself generally uses faith, the noun, in the absolute and generic sense. But the verb "believe" (πιστευειν), He occasionally applies to Himself, "believing in," or "on me," though in the synoptic gospels generally used in the absolute sense. But in St John's Gospel, thirty-nine passages, about one-half the whole number, give us "believe in or on Christ." Nearly this same proportion holds in the Acts and Epistles. So in the Acts and the Epistles, the word faith, used absolutely in the large number of cases, is when the object is mentioned, in nineteen instances, "faith in or of Christ," in three, "faith in or toward God," and in one case, "faith in His (Christ's) blood." This fact makes it quite evident that to the mind of the New Testament writers, the personal Christ was the object of faith rather than any abstract conception of the Atonement, on the one hand, or any specific declaration of promise on the other. The Atonement was the work of Christ, and the promises were the words of Christ, and the faith which believed in *Him* included both. The single expression, "faith in His blood," does in one case point to the Atonement as the object of faith. There the Atonement is set forth as a propitiatory

offering. "Whom God has set forth a propitiation through faith in His blood." So in the parallel passage: "He is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world." Thus even this passage does not separate Christ from His work. He is the offering and the offerer, and "faith in His blood" is faith in Himself, as He gives Himself a propitiatory offering to God. All that we have already said about the moral value of His work applies directly to this offering and sacrifice.

According to the teaching of the New Testament then the new probation established by Christ's work for the whole race makes individual acceptance with God depend upon a continuous personal faith, which faith takes hold of Christ, not only as giving Himself for the whole world, but as giving "Himself for me" (Gal. ii. 20). How does this act of faith bring me thus into special and individual relation to Christ and His work for my salvation by the forgiveness of my sins?

We have already seen that by the general moral law, explained at the beginning of our study, the general benefits which flow to the race from the Atonement come through Christ's uniting Himself to the race, restoring it to all the possibilities of spiritual life. It is under the same law that each individual is personally linked to Christ for the personal benefits of the Atonement. Faith is the instrument of union with Christ. "Christ dwells in our hearts by faith,"

and we by faith are grafted into Him—the living vine. We are "members of His body," we are "His brethren," we are "His saints," "His elect," "His own," "His peculiar people," "His church." All these easily-recognised Scripture terms express an inner unity with Christ, in virtue of which the full benefits of the Atonement are conferred—no longer as a matter of universal unconditional grace, but as a matter of gracious probation. "If children, heirs, heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ, if so be that we suffer with Him that we may be also glorified together." It is at this point that the Church, for nearly fifteen centuries, has been divided into two opposing camps,—the one, and, in all the ages, by far the larger part, holding that the entrance into this higher unity is truly probational; the other that it is absolutely fixed and effected by God. In discussing this problem, the advocates of the necessitarian view have always had this advantage,—that the substitutionary theory of atonement in its very nature implied a fixed and determined number, whose sins were borne, in whose stead Christ suffered, and whose sins were cancelled by His sufferings. On the other hand, those who have maintained the probational view have the advantage — first, of the inner consciousness of responsibility which every man feels, and from which he cannot set himself free by any consideration of his moral conditions; and, secondly, of the entire tenor of Scripture, which certainly supports the idea that, under the Gospel, man is in a truly pro-

bational relation to God, and to eternal destiny. This question presents itself under another topic of theology, and must there be discussed. It is only necessary here to ask: Does the view of the valency of the Atonement, and of its relation to the race, and to the individual, which we have here presented, lay the foundation for a probational or for a necessitated personal salvation?

First, there can be no doubt that the merit of Christ's work calls for its reward. That reward is all the fulness of Divine love, grace and promise to His own. These are assured to His people by the justice as well as the love of the Father. To those who are in Christ Jesus the immutability of God assures "no condemnation." In Christ we have a strong consolation who have fled for refuge, to lay hold of the hope set before us in the Gospel. But while the relation between Christ's work and His reward is thus unalterably sure, it is a great mistake to suppose it capable of being weighed, measured, or numbered, or equated with the demerits or wants of any number of sinners. Christ would have His reward in the infinite love, faithfulness, and grace of the Father in the salvation of *one sinner*, and *nothing less than the merits of Christ could save that one sinner. Those same merits needed for the salvation of one sinner* are at the same moment, and by the very same virtue, *adequate to the salvation of all the countless myriads of the race.* It is this personal character of the work of Christ which makes it capable of *unlimited application.* "He is the

author of eternal salvation unto *all them* that obey Him" (Heb. v. 9). Every time that a sinner comes to God in His name He is still "able to save to the uttermost them that draw near unto God through Him, seeing He ever liveth to make intercession for them" (Heb. vii. 25). While, therefore, the merit of Christ's work is immutably certain in its efficacy, and unlimited in its application, that application is, by its very nature, capable of control by probational conditions—in fact, must be controlled by conditions of some kind. It is capable of unlimited application. It is applied only to those who are Christ's. In this all are agreed. The only question is, How do we become Christ's—by a determining decree of God or by probational faith? The work of Christ itself certainly does not by its nature determine it. The Scriptures everywhere proclaim its unlimited scope, and the possibility of its application to all. It is a personal merit of the Son who obeyed the Father's loving command even unto death, yea the death of the cross. It has given Him mediatorial power. That power is needed in all its fulness by every sinner. It is, therefore, capable of laying the foundation of just such gracious probation as our ethical theology requires, and as we believe the Scripture teaches.

Again, this work of Christ in its nature exerts the moral power by which we may be lifted into the new and holy life.

First, it asserts the guilt of sin. The law which condemns it to penalty cannot be broken.

Christ Himself died to obey that law. He suffered the penalty laid upon the race.

Second, it sets forth the unspeakable value of holiness and of obedience to God. The infinite saving efficacy of Christ's work lies in the value of obedience. The glory of His mediatorial kingdom is founded on the worth of His righteousness and obedience.

Third, it has in it all the drawing power of love. "He loved us and gave Himself for us." "We love Him because He first loved us."

Fourth, it is the example to man, and to the universe of moral beings, of Divine righteousness in all its fundamental elements—

1. As right.
2. As law.
3. As obedience.
4. As self-sacrifice.
5. As love.

Lastly, by the power of its moral value as a work of right, of law, of obedience, of self-sacrifice, of love, it gives infinite strength to that moral power in which the government of God stands eternally secure. It is not an expedient, not a makeshift to terrify, or a public dramatic object lesson, but it is the highest perfection of moral good that the universe has seen or can see, wrought out to the honour and glory of the Father by His well-beloved Son, a work which angels desire to look into, and beholding enter more perfectly themselves into the moral mind of God.

The Atonement then originates with the love of the Father to a world of sinners sending His only begotten Son. It is wrought by the love of the Son who enters into the will of the Father with loving obedience. To render that obedience, He enters into that law of our moral constitution which renders salvation possible and becomes man. As man He bows to all the penalty which Divine law had laid upon the race. He does this that He may win from among men some who will believe on His name, *i.e.* find the lost sheep. In doing this He merits from the Father an infinite reward, the benefits of which accrue to the race with which He made Himself one — first to all the race in bringing all within reach of God's mercy and a new and gracious probation, and then to all who receive Him and become His own in "giving them power to become the sons of God."

Thus, that which atones for sin is the offering to God of an infinite righteousness, in which the bearing of penalty is indeed the culmination of self-sacrifice, but in which the efficacy lies in the merit of its love, and from which there springs an inexhaustible fountain of grace and salvation.

The Resurrection in the Revelation of Redemption.

We may append to the New Testament idea of the atoning work of Christ a brief consideration of the Resurrection as related to human

redemption. Its importance in this respect is evident from the prominence given to it in the Apostolic preaching. It is even associated with the death of Christ as a foundation fact of the Christian faith in such passages as Rom. iv. 25, and Paul's summary of Christian faith, 1 Cor. xv. 3.

In the Apostolic preaching it receives great emphasis.

1. As the crowning evidence of our Lord's divinity. He was declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the Spirit of holiness, by the resurrection of the dead.

2. As the Divine seal of acceptance of the work of Christ and of His mediatorial authority. Christ's resurrection from the dead is the world's "assurance" of the final consummation of that work in the general judgment.

3. As the first-fruits, and so evidence of that final triumph over death in which all that are in their graves shall hear the voice of the Son of Man and shall come forth to life again.

On this account our Lord announces it as the test and seal of His Divine mission and confirms this after the resurrection itself. Compare John ii. 19-21, and Matt. xii. 40, with xxiv. 46.

CHAPTER VI

THE MEDIATORIAL OFFICE

THE resurrection of our Lord after His atoning death leads up to that permanent position of authority and grace which He occupies in God's economy of Redemption. In our older theology this was set forth under the offices of prophet, priest, and king. He is the source of all light of truth and power of salvation to the world. He is our high priest through whose sacrifice and continued intercession alone we may draw near to God, and find acceptance in His sight. And He is the King upon the throne of the universe, directing all things for the establishment of God's Kingdom upon the earth and in the universe. These offices together constituted His mediatorial work. This presentation has many advantages. It presents the work of Christ under the new dispensation as the culmination of the Old Covenant. There the prophets unfolded and proclaimed to men the will of God, a work completed in all its fulness of grace and truth by Christ. There the high priests offered the atoning sacrifices by which the people drew near to God, a work the whole significance of which is derived from His offering of Himself.

The chosen people were guided and governed in their national life by their king, who was the Lord's anointed, and was even spoken of in His official capacity as the Son of God. But the true kingdom is that of Jesus Christ in which He is the head of the Church, and governs the whole world and the universe of God in a Mediatorial Providence which concentrates all its moral forces in the work of redeeming sinners and restoring them to the favour and image of God; and which will be consummated in the final judgment and the eternal kingdom wherein shall dwell only the holy and the blessed. The foundation of this conception is laid in the entire preparation made for the coming of Christ in the Old Testament. The religious elements which entered into that preparation were furnished by the prophets, the priest and the king. At first the Messianic hope centres around the king, and He is pre-eminently the type of the coming One. Deuteronomy and Jeremiah add to this the conception of a great coming prophet, and Ezekiel and the second Isaiah, the conception of a new atonement in a new temple and made by the elect servant of Jehovah. The ideas of the work of Christ as the Saviour of men thus presented were peculiarly adapted to the Jewish people, and readily enabled them to grasp and receive, without prejudice, the essential faith of Christianity. Christ became thus to them all that their ancient faith required or hoped for. The Messianic idea our Lord Himself developed in the parables, but dwelt

much more largely upon the Kingdom as the Kingdom of God and of heaven, than upon the King or the Kingship, though before Pilate He owned Himself a King whose kingdom was not of this world, and whose only weapon was the truth; and to His disciples He at times held out the coming of the Son of Man in His Kingdom with power and great glory. The institution of the Lord's Supper, the paschal discourses and the intercessory prayer also turn our thoughts to the exercise of a priestly office. But here at the same time the mediatorial office, as including all these types and shadows, and as far greater and more comprehensive than all these begins distinctly to appear. Here He presents Himself as the revealer of the Father; as "the way, the truth, and the life," through whom we "come to the Father." He teaches His disciples to "ask in His name"; and He says, "Whatsoever ye shall ask in My name that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son." Again He says: "I will pray the Father, and He shall give you another Comforter that He may be with you for ever, even the Spirit of truth." "And when the Comforter is come whom I will send unto you from the Father even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, He shall bear witness of Me; and ye also bear witness because ye have been with Me from the beginning."

"It is expedient for you that I go away; for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I go, I will send Him unto

you." "In that day ye shall ask in My name: and I say not unto you that I will pray the Father for you, for the Father Himself loveth you." In these words He lays the foundation in the minds of His disciples of full faith in His mediatorial work, including His abiding presence, and revealing and comforting work in their hearts through His Spirit, the availing power of His name in prayer, and His continuous work of intercession on their behalf. When we add to this the teaching of the parables of the Kingdom, and the words with which the final commission is introduced, "All power hath been given unto Me in heaven and on earth," it will be seen how thoroughly our Lord Himself laid the foundation for this faith in His abiding mediatorial office and work.

In the Jewish branches of the Christian Church this faith received its full expansion under the analogy of the Old Testament institutions. This expansion we have in the Epistle to the Hebrews. The Apocalypse also indirectly presents many elements of the same faith under the same symbolic form; in fact the two books probably present us with the same phase of development of this doctrine. We can find the beginning of this development in the very first Apostolic preaching. In Peter's sermon on the day of Pentecost the gift of the Holy Ghost then first received is at once recognised by him as the mediatorial work of the risen and ascended Lord. He receives this of the Father, He bestows it upon

His disciples. This, his first work, is the proof that God hath made Him both Lord and Christ, *i.e.* hath placed Him in the position of permanent authority and grace at the head of the Messianic Kingdom. In his next discourse faith in the name of the risen Prince of Life is the source of healing power, future "seasons of refreshing" are to come from His presence, and He abides in the heavens (the seat of Divine power) "till the times of the restoration of all things," and His present mission as the Servant of God is to bless every one by turning them away from their iniquities. In a following discourse he speaks again of Him as the one whom "God did exalt with His right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel and remission of sins." It is not difficult to appreciate the subsequent expansion of this spiritual Messianic faith into the full expression contained in the Epistle to the Hebrews from the side of atonement and forgiveness of sins, or into that of the Apocalypse from the side of the world-wide Messianic Kingdom.

But to the Gentiles the whole work and office of Christ for the world's salvation is developed from a different analogy, though with equal, if not even greater fulness by St Paul. Paul's complete presentation of this mediatorial work we have in the Epistles to the Ephesians and Colossians, though many collateral elements may be gathered from other parts of his writings, especially from his description of the consumma-

tion in the fifteenth of first Corinthians. Here the incarnation, the atoning work, the mediatorial office, the progressive kingdom, and the final consummation are all combined in one "eternal purpose," or, as we might translate it, "purpose of the ages." This purpose, "hid from all ages in God," is a revelation to the highest intelligences of the universe of the manifold wisdom of God. It includes the original creation of all things by Jesus Christ, the summing up of all things in heaven and earth in Christ, the exaltation of Christ "far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world but also in that which is to come, the headship of Christ to His Church, supplying her with all fulness of blessing, the final consummation of the Kingdom of God, the resurrection of the dead, the judgment, and an eternal state in which God shall be all in all. The application of this grand ideal to all the history of the Church, and of the individual Christian, fills out Paul's preaching and writing, and evidently inspires his whole life. It is the unsearchable riches of Christ given to one who feels and calls himself less than the least of all saints to preach among the Gentiles. In it in all things Christ has "the pre-eminence." It presents the grandest ideal of the world's moral history ever received by the mind of man. It is interesting to see how this glory of Christ in the revelation given to Paul for the Gentile Church is paralleled by the similar revelation given to the Jewish Church in the

Epistle to the Hebrews. There Christ is superior, not only to Moses and Joshua and the Aaronic priesthood, but to angels and all other ministers of God, being the Son by whom He made the worlds of time. In the spiritual life of the Church, to the living faith of the Church, the risen Christ was revealed like the morning sun in the heavens reaching mid-day splendour to the vision of both branches of the Apostolic Church before the first generation was ended. The mediatorial office of Christ as thus unfolded in the New Testament has its foundation in the following facts:

1. The Incarnation.
2. The human life of temptation and suffering making Him perfect through suffering for this office.
3. The atoning death.
4. The Resurrection and Ascension.

Lastly, the descent of the Spirit on the day of Pentecost was the evidential fact which revealed Christ as fully entered upon His office and endued with its authority and power. Each successive triumph of the Gospel confirmed this evidence and not only gave full assurance to this Apostolic faith in the authority and power of their Master, but also expanded their apprehension of its grandeur and glory. This mediatorial idea has thus become a most important element of religious faith. It enters into the very essence of Christianity as a religion, especially in the following particulars:

1. It makes the Atonement not an abstract idea, or a long past fact, remembered in the world's history, but the living merit of the living Saviour, binding our faith to the personal living Almighty Saviour and not to a remembered past fact. The importance of this to a true religious faith we shall understand presently.

2. It lays the foundation not only for the confidence of personal faith in a personal Saviour, but also for personal responsibility to Him as our Divine Master. Nothing is more prominent in the New Testament than the deep religious sense of this relationship. It is the glory and joy of the Apostolic Christians from Peter, Paul and John out to the humblest disciple, and forms the basis of all duty and service. The importance and prominence of the mediatorial idea in New Testament religion is also seen in the vast extension of it which has appeared in the religious faith of later times. As an idea peculiarly adapted to the spiritual infirmity of sinful humanity, it took hold on the human mind, and was expanded to a mediating church, a mediating human priesthood, mediating saints, the Virgin Mary, etc., forming a vast system which caused religious faith to rest short of God Himself, and hence to so far cease to be true religion; and which set before the minds of men ideals less than the perfect God and perfect man. For any of these extensions the New Testament furnishes no authority. The "one Mediator" between God and men is "Christ Jesus, Man."

CHAPTER VII

THE HOLY SPIRIT IN REDEMPTION

THE first-fruits of our Lord's mediatorial office appear in that gift of the Holy Ghost by which Christianity as a religion was inaugurated on the day of Pentecost. The spirit then given was recognised by Peter as the promise of the Father and the gift of the risen and ascended Lord (Acts ii. 33). This was the fulfilment of His own first reference to His mediatorial work in the paschal discourses, "I will pray the Father and He shall give you another Comforter that He may be with you for ever." The office and work of the Spirit thus follows in natural order after the mediatorial work of Christ.

To the Old Testament Church the Holy Spirit was already a familiar presence as we have seen in our study of the doctrine of the Trinity. We there find the Holy Spirit as the source of all efficiency in nature and the agent of God's work in Creation; as the source of intelligence, genius and ability in man, and more especially as the power from which comes moral discernment, noble impulses and religious illumination. From these it is an easy step to the supernatural prophetic spirit which included but passed beyond them

all. In this Old Testament teaching the Holy Spirit unites the material and the spiritual, the natural and the supernatural, the things past and the things to come. To religious faith they are all alike, the work of the Spirit of God who worketh all and in all. So to the Apostles the Spirit who inspired the ancient prophets was the Spirit of Christ, revealing His coming and work. It is quite in the line of this Old Testament teaching when we are told that the human body of Christ was prepared by the Holy Spirit apart from the common process of nature; and that when entering upon His ministry, His human spirit was endowed for the Messianic office and work by the descent upon Him of the Holy Ghost.

This Old Testament teaching prepared the minds of the disciples of Christ to appreciate His teaching, when He outlined to them in His parting discourses and final commission the pre-eminence of the Holy Spirit in the new dispensation. The new dispensation was to be not merely a new set of outward institutions for the maintenance or extension of religion amongst men; nor was it to be a set of new facts serving to reveal God more fully, and so to act as motives to a more perfect religious life; nor yet was it to be a new and more complete system of religious doctrines, or an enlarged religious faith embracing a wider circle of religious truth. All these we have already found it to be. But beyond all these, deeper than all these, creating all these,

it was to be a more universal and more powerful manifestation of that Spirit of God whose presence and work are the secret of all efficiency both in the natural and in the spiritual world. Its analogy might thus be found in one of those great transitions in the geological history of our planet in which we find it by the creative agency of the same spirit passing from a lower to a higher plane of life. It was the gift to men, accompanying the more perfect revelation of God, of the power within themselves of a higher moral and religious life. It is a new more abundant and universal manifestation of the Creator Spirit from whom all life and created being come.

We have already referred to our Lord's promise of this gift of the Holy Spirit, both before and after His resurrection, and as recorded in several passages by both Luke and John. It is not said expressly that these promises were the direct cause of the action of the disciples which followed, but the connection of thought in the record suggests that conclusion. After our Lord's ascension the eleven, with other disciples, making a company of about one hundred and twenty, continued with one accord in prayer and supplication. They evidently had their commission in mind, for they made provision for its fulfilment by the election of Matthias. At the end of ten days, being the Hebrew Pentecost, or festival of first-fruits, they were assembled in the usual manner, when "suddenly there came from heaven a sound as of the rushing of a mighty wind, and it filled all the

house where they were sitting. And there appeared unto them tongues parting asunder like as of fire; and it sat upon each one of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance." The first part of this account describes a purely physical phenomenon, sensible to the eye and ear. But this is only the prelude to a form of expression which turns our thoughts at once to spiritual things. The words, "they were all filled with the Holy Spirit," are common in both the Old Testament and the New, and always to express moral and religious—*i.e.* spiritual—light, or energy, or life, such as we shall examine more fully hereafter. The expression, "they began to speak with other tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance," is a new form of expression soon to become familiar in the Christian Church, so as to form almost a part of the ordinary religious exercises in the Apostolic age. But though so familiar then, in our day we can scarcely decide with certainty as to its exact import, we know that it was one of many gifts of the Spirit, and that it represented some form of endowment connected with the utterance of religious thought and emotion, through spoken language, conveying these thoughts to men from many lands, so that they exclaimed in astonishment, "We do hear them speaking in our tongues the mighty works of God." Then followed the sermon of Peter to the assembled multitude, with this result: "They were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and

the rest of the Apostles, 'Brethren, what shall we do?' Immediately Peter addresses to them the great fundamentals of Christianity in these words: 'Repent ye, and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ unto the remission of your sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. For to you is the promise, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call unto Him.' They then that received His word were baptized: and there were added to them in that day about three thousand souls. And they continued steadfastly in the Apostles' teaching and fellowship, in the breaking of bread and the prayers."

Now, laying aside for the present the physical phenomena and the gift of tongues, to which we may return again, let us look carefully at what of a more purely spiritual character took place on this occasion.

This is set forth in three statements of fact:—

1. We have the general expression, "They were all filled with the Holy Spirit." Following the Old Testament usage of these words, they can only mean an extraordinary natural or supernatural endowment of these men with gifts of spiritual intelligence or power not before possessed.

2. They "spake the mighty works of God" as "the Spirit gave them utterance." This centers the more general idea in religious understanding, and in gifts of speech or utterance of the new thoughts thus received.

3. Peter's sermon and its wonderful results in the conversion of the three thousand, together with the remarkable grace of these new converts, indicating their completely changed character, give us a still more definite knowledge of the new ideas which were imparted in this illumination, and of their moral power in renewing the hearts and lives of men. They included the very fundamentals of Christianity as a religious faith, repentance, remission of sins, faith in Jesus Christ, and this gift of the Holy Spirit. These made a man a Christian, or, as he was then called, a disciple, and they centered around the outward ordinance of baptism.

The illustration of the work of the Holy Spirit given at this beginning of the Christian dispensation is very largely extended as we follow the history of the Apostolic Church throughout the book of Acts. Some one has indeed proposed to call the book the gospel of the Holy Ghost. What is there on the day of Pentecost exhibited as a new understanding of religious truth, with power to preach it, and power both of moral conviction of sin and of regeneration and sanctification of the sinful nature of man, and of influence by which this new individual spiritual life by the ordinance of baptism at once assumes organic form as a living community of God's people, is rapidly extended to tens of thousands of people. Jerusalem is filled with the doctrine. A great company of the priests become obedient to the faith. The towns of Judea and Samaria and

Galilee to Damascus and Antioch are evangelised. Difficult questions of polity and doctrine are settled. A broader and more Christ-like view of God's grace is given to the world and under its light and liberty the Gentiles enter the Church of Christ. Roman Asia, Greece and Rome itself are reached. In all this the directing presence of the Holy Spirit is everywhere manifest, guiding the corporate Church, guiding its individual leaders, creating its new thought and its new form of expression and record of that thought, but all from the fundamental basis of a moral and religious quickening into new life and power of the individual souls of men. It is not a magical or arbitrary force or power from without, but a spiritual lifting from within. Fixing our attention upon the moral and religious phenomena as facts in the religious history of mankind, and we have abundant repetition and illustration of these facts in our own day, we can for the moment lay out of sight all the supernatural accompaniments as in the study of the Ulster revivals of the early sixties, we can lay aside the unusual physical phenomena which accompanied the acknowledged work of moral and religious power which there took place. But these facts need not be avoided as if we feared to face them as facts. In the modern case, however mysterious, they were too well known at the time and too well attested to be denied. Perhaps in our study of ancient history we may learn a lesson from this. But whether ancient or modern, however brought

about physically, whether by natural law or supernatural agency, they have their moral purpose and effect. In the first place simply as physical facts they are to religious faith a demonstration of the power and presence of God. Before them men are almost by a moral compulsion convicted of the presence of God and of their sinfulness before Him. So they acted in the Apostolic age. The gift of tongues, healing, interpretation of tongues and other supernatural phenomena which accompanied the Apostolic preaching were for a sign to the unbelieving; but the higher gift was prophesying, *i.e.* the understanding and utterance of God's truth; this was after all the fundamental work of the Spirit, the leading of men to the knowledge of the truth, and the awakening in their hearts of strong conviction of truth.

We are to seek then the office and work of the Holy Spirit, not so much in the occasional examples of supernatural power which accompanied the Apostolic preaching and work, as in that great movement of enlarged understanding of truth, of stronger moral convictions, of deeper, larger, and more fully assured faith, which beginning at Pentecost laid the foundations of the Christian Church. The main features of that movement may be summed up in the following particulars:—

1. In a complete though gradual unfolding to the Church of the new truth of Christianity. This was Christ's own promise, "He shall teach you

all things and bring to your remembrance all that I said unto you," "He shall bear witness of me," and "He shall guide you into all the truth." Of this promise Paul records the fulfilment when he writes to the Corinthians of the excellency of Gospel truth:

"Things which eye saw not, and ear heard not, and which entered not into the heart of man: whatsoever things God prepared for them that love Him; but unto us God revealed them by His spirit"; and again, "The mystery of Christ which in other generations was not made known unto the sons of men as it has now been revealed unto His holy apostles and prophets in the Spirit." As this unfolding was gradual, so it was historical, following the course of a natural development, keeping pace with the needs of the growing Church, until in the close of the first generation it reached its completeness.

2. In endowing with spiritual power for their work the preachers of the Gospel. This also was the promise of Christ, "Ye shall receive power when the Holy Ghost is come upon you, and ye shall be my witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judæa and Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth." The fulfilment is equally distinct. After such a baptism it is written, "And with great power gave the Apostles their witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and great grace was upon them all." So Paul also attests to the Thessalonians: "Our gospel came not unto you in word only, but also in power and

in the Holy Ghost and in much assurance"; and still more generally to the Romans, "I am not ashamed of the gospel: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth."

3. In awakening conviction in the hearts of those to whom the Gospel is preached. This again was the promise of Christ: "And He when He is come will convict the world in respect of sin, and of righteousness and of judgment," a promise fulfilled under the very first sermon, where, as we have seen, thousands were "pricked in their hearts," and led to cry, "Brethren, what shall we do." No part of the office and work of the Spirit is more conspicuous in the history of the Church than this. It lies at the very foundation of the work of the world's redemption from sin. From the prehistoric memories of redemption down to the fulness of the Christian dispensation conviction of sin has been an important element of saving religion. In the Christian Church it is the very centre and secret of its saving power. The Gospel triumphs only as men are deeply convicted of their sin.

4. In working a moral renewal in the hearts of those who hear and believe the Gospel. This was in the Apostolic age a very marked experience and was known as the gift of the Holy Spirit. It sometimes accompanied specific ordinances, as baptism, or the laying on of the hands of the Apostles; in other cases it preceded these as in the case of Cornelius and his friends. But however conditioned, it is in the Apostolic history a

clearly marked feature of the Christian life, so distinctly and outwardly manifest as to be evident to all men. It may be questioned whether it ever in the Apostolic age appears as a mysterious and hidden accompaniment to be assumed as following an outward ordinance. In the Apostolic age at least it was known and read of all men by its fruits, and was known and acknowledged as the work of the Holy Ghost.

5. In an abiding, enlightening, sanctifying, and comforting presence in the heart of every individual child of God. This again was the promise of Christ. What He was to His disciples as they daily walked and talked with their Master and learned from Him the things of God, the other Comforter, who was not to sojourn for a season but to abide with them forever, was always to be. The dulness of their understanding, the sorrow of their hearts, all their anxious troubles were to be provided for by Him. Our Lord indeed ascribes sanctifying power to the truth, but the Holy Spirit is the Spirit of truth and thus the Sanctifier as well as the Comforter, in the words of Paul the Helper of our infirmities.

6. Finally, as in the individual Christian and the ministry of the Church so in the corporate Church herself, the Holy Spirit is an abiding presence. It is, in fact, this presence which constitutes the living Church. As the body is sustained and nourished and grows through the indwelling soul, so is the Church an habitation of God and of Christ through the Spirit. If the

Church have lost the indwelling presence of the Spirit, she may have a name to live but is dead and ready to be spewed out of Christ's mouth. But the indwelling Spirit guides her in her work, as in the first mission of Paul and Barnabas from Antioch and in the freedom of the Gentiles from the bondage of Jewish ordinances; and gives power and efficacy to all her instituted ordinances, so making her indeed the Church of the living God who dwelleth in her by His Spirit.

This presence and power of the Holy Spirit is the characteristic of the Christian dispensation, predicted by the Old Testament prophets, and without it the Mediatorial Kingdom and the redemption from sin must fail. It alone can build upon the foundation of the atonement, applying the truth to the salvation of men, and representing the Lord Himself in the governance of His Kingdom.

CHAPTER VIII

UNIVERSAL GRACE

WE have already under the doctrine of the Atonement referred to its provisions of universal grace as the foundation of a gracious probation to individual men, thus leading us up to personal salvation. This grace is set forth by St Paul in two classical passages, in one of which the glory, efficacy, and universality of grace are magnified; and in the other, contrasted with the power of sin, as reaching all men through the laws of heredity and moral solidarity. These passages are Titus ii. 12, "The grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared for all men"; and Rom. v. 18, "So then as through one trespass the judgment came unto all men unto condemnation, even so through one act of righteousness the free gift came unto all men unto justification of life." The universal benefit which thus accrues to the race through the Atonement, the mediatorial work of Christ and the work of the Holy Spirit may be conveniently considered as a supplement to the Divine provisions of redemption in the gift and work of Christ and of the Spirit. They are the direct outcome of Redemption, and prepare the way for its application for the salvation of individual men.

Paul calls this universal benefit of redemption "the free gift" and "grace," or more fully "the grace of God that bringeth salvation." The word grace has a twofold significance, first, the disposition which bestows kindness on those who have no claim to it, and again, the kindness itself so bestowed. In the second passage "the gift" or "the free gift" is used for the second meaning above, and grace is confined to the first, and is not the result but the moving cause of the Atonement itself. It is of the second meaning of grace that we must now enquire.

The universal and unconditional benefit of the work of Christ and of the Spirit to the race we shall call universal grace or the free gift for all. Even this universal grace must be regarded as unconditioned only as granted at the foundation of each individual probation. It, too, has its conditions in the common probation of races, peoples, and families of men. It is only unconditional as the basis of each individual probation granted freely by God according to His sovereign mercy.

From the passages before us it is evident that this grace is effective towards salvation, as sin was effective towards condemnation. It is not said that it saves, but it "bringeth salvation"; and it is not said that it justifies, but it is unto justification of life. It brings salvation by teaching, and is something which is manifest, *i.e.* known, and has made its appearance for all men, something of which men are clearly cog-

nisant. It is thus not some secret mysterious unconscious working, but something consciously known and capable of recognition in the world.

We have thus set before us as the first result of the Atonement a distinct moral power in the world, universal in its influence, and working towards the salvation of men. As to the nature of this power three opinions have been held, which seem inconsistent with these teachings of the New Testament:

1. The older Calvinism reduced it to mere temporal beneficence, or to a work of the Spirit ineffectual for salvation. Our texts make no reference to temporal benefits, but solely to that which is spiritual and unto salvation, and give no ground for any supposition that it is insufficient for its purpose.

2. Some Arminians make it equivalent to a universal regeneration and justification of all infants, thus rendering original sin or depravity largely, if not entirely, hypothetical. They would have existed had not the Atonement intervened; but now they are abolished, or exist only as the sin which remains after regeneration. The objection to this theory is its lack of scriptural foundation—the fact that it is built purely on a logical basis, and is not a matter of religious faith, and that it is inconsistent with the teaching of Scripture, supported as it is by the moral consciousness of the race, on the subject of human sinfulness, and the universal need of regeneration. "Ye must be born again." We cannot conceive of Christ

using such words as these if all men were already regenerate through the common universal provisions of Divine grace. Everywhere regeneration and all other blessings of the Christian salvation are set forth as a universal need, and as conditioned on repentance and faith. To this the moral consciousness of the race fully responds.

3. Universalists generally interpret it as absolutely securing the salvation of all men by a process or act of unconditioned grace. This stands opposed to the entire teaching of the New Testament on human responsibility and probation.

Our definition of universal grace must harmonise—

(*a*) With the Scripture teaching that it is universal; the Apostles' "all men" must not be minified. Christ is the Light "which lighteth every man coming into the world."

(*b*) With the Scripture implication, if not direct assertion, that it is sufficient for salvation. The scriptural faith that each man's condemnation is of himself and not of his conditions or moral environment clearly implies this. The texts which we have quoted we think directly assert it, as does also the common sense of moral responsibility before God.

(*c*) With man's individual fallen condition and conscious need of personal salvation. This is so evidently the teaching of Scripture, and is so fully attested by universal experience, that we need not dwell on it here. It will be more fully defined presently.

(*d*) With the probational conditions of personal salvation, as set forth in the Gospel.

These limitations of related truth will exclude false conceptions in various directions such as have often perverted this truth into dangerous error, or have obscured its moral influence in religion. Turning to the New Testament faith for the positive conception of this truth, we find it set forth—

1. As opposed at every point to the influence of sin on the race, and through the race on the individual. This is set forth by Paul in the passage already quoted from the fifth of Romans.

2. As such it dispels the moral darkness which sin has brought to the race by new light of moral and religious truth. Thus Christ is "the true light which lighteth every man that cometh into the world." This light brings universal moral responsibility, for, "This is the judgment that the light is come into the world, and men love darkness rather than the light; for their works were evil." So Christ announces Himself as "the light of the world"; and Paul recognises this light even in the heathen world, in the first and second of Romans.

3. It awakens the dead moral natures of men by the quickening influences of the Holy Spirit, making their consciences sensitive to the power of the truth. Even the Old Testament, in Gen. vi. 3, and Job xxii. 8, recognises moral discernment as the work of God's Spirit, and predicts that this Spirit shall be poured out upon all flesh (Joel ii. 28); while in the New Testament our Lord

promises that when this Spirit is come, "He will convict the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment."

4. The extent of this light and power of the Spirit is such as places men once more in a position of moral responsibility, such that St Paul says they are without excuse.

Even fallen men thus stand under the provisions of redemption in a position of probational responsibility, salvation becomes possible to all, and each man's salvation depends upon his use of the new gracious probation. What the terms and conditions of the new probation are we shall consider presently. In the meantime a single collateral question arises, What becomes of those who die before they arrive at years of accountability if the race is not universally justified and regenerated in virtue of the unconditional benefits of the Atonement? A complete answer cannot be given to this question from direct Scripture statement, because Scripture confines its teaching to the necessities of men on probation. If aught required to be done for the salvation of those dying in infancy either by themselves or by their sponsors, it would doubtless be so clearly stated. Whatever may be God's method of dealing with them it lies beyond the sphere of our moral agency, and hence concerning it Scripture is silent. Some points, however, are made clear indirectly:

1. They are within the circle of God's love to the race. "God so loved the world."

2. Christ saw in them all the possibilities of the Kingdom of God. Hence He says, "Except ye become as little children ye shall in no wise enter into the kingdom of heaven," and speaks of them as "these little ones which believe on Me." And again, "of such is the kingdom of heaven." That is, it belongs by promise to them.

3. He declares that it is not the will of God that one of them should perish (Matt. xviii. 14). Compare on this point 1 Kings xiv. 13.

4. Hence while the method in which God deals with them is not directly revealed, and while the lack of probation places an essential difference between them and those who pass through the conditions of salvation in this life, we may rest in the fullest assurance that God has provided for them, and that in His infinite love and mercy they are safe.

DIVISION VI.—PERSONAL SALVATION

CHAPTER I

THE NEW PROBATION

HAVING thus completed our study of the general provisions of redemption as they prepare the way for the salvation of man from sin, we turn now to the administration of this redemption in the several processes of salvation. At this point a wide division appears in the practical faith of the Christian Church, and one which at least on the surface appears to be of serious importance. On the one side emphasis is laid upon the Church as the divinely ordered embodiment of the provisions of redemption among men, and the sole agency for the extension of its saving benefits to individual men, and that by means of a very rigidly defined external order of institutions. From this standpoint our next study should be that of the Church and its ordinances as really an integral part of the provisions of redemption.

The other section emphasizes the Divine dealing with the individual soul, brings each individual man into direct relations of personal responsibility

to God, making the Church and its institutions a divinely ordered and important auxiliary to this. This is the standpoint as we take it of the Protestant Reformation and the standpoint in which we proceed with our study from the Divine provisions of redemption at once to the way of personal salvation. Even from what is called the Catholic point of view, the result to be attained is the same, the spiritual restoration of individual men to the favour and love of God in Christ; and here all men of living Christian faith, Catholic or Protestant, may again unite in that living fellowship of the Spirit which is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ our Lord.

The Individual to be saved

is, as we have seen, a sinner in his fallen nature as well as in his acts of sin. In this fall, sin has replaced faith and love to God by a mortal terror of Divine judgment; spiritual understanding has been darkened, conscience has become dull if not entirely dead, falsehood has taken the place of truth, and the flesh, man's lower nature, rules over the Spirit.

But this fallen being is under the Divine provisions of redemption. The light of truth is penetrating his blindness, and the quickening power of the Spirit is awakening his conscience, and his very dread of the just judgments of God are a sign that all power of spiritual life is not extinguished. He, though a sinner in his sins,

is by the redeeming grace of God under a new probation for salvation.

We have already defined probation as the process of moral life by which we make virtue or moral goodness our own, and we have seen what is implied in this probation. We have also considered probation as involved in the original moral history and development of the race ending in the universal fall of man into sin. We may now consider other possible forms of probation.

1. The form of probation already considered involved a nature morally good, in which moral intelligence and power of choice existed, and in which character, *i.e.* habit and disposition of motive forces was towards the right, but with antithetic elements still capable of perversion to evil, and with an external temptation or tempter. In his choice we have found that man fell from good into sin.

2. Another form of probation to which we have some reference in Scripture, seems to be of a different kind and with different results. So far as we can judge, this probation involved a nature good, and with perhaps a moral development more advanced than that of primitive man, but still with antithetic elements capable of perversion to sin, either with or without external temptation. In this nature again we have intimations that sin became a fact, though not as in the case of man a universal fact. Into the probation of some of the angels, temptation may

have entered, but at least with some there could have been no temptation and their sin must have been entirely their own doing.

Probation therefore does not imply moral indifference as Pelagius is said to have held. In fact, it may be doubtful whether a moral nature could exist in a state of absolute indifference to both good and evil. It rather seems that a being endowed with moral nature must by the very necessity of that nature be either good or bad, and as the original creature of God we can only think of him as good. But if a moral being with all the powers of his being set by his very nature towards the good may yet be placed on probation either with or without temptation from without, it seems no less possible that a moral being fallen into sin and with habits and dispositions inclined to sin may again be restored to probation. Probation means for him that once more through the grace of God, the good is brought within his reach.

The new probation is such a probation. It is a probation for sinners. It brings to them in their sinful and fallen condition such saving influences as once more place life and goodness and God within their reach.

As we have seen in the original probation of the race, all probation implies a test. The test of the first probation was the supremacy of conscience in the control of sense. This presented itself to the first humanity in some outward form as the law of God. "Thou shalt not eat of it."

Such a test in itself implied the strength of a nature naturally good, and its object was to convert the natural goodness bestowed by God into the moral goodness of immutable holy character lifting man into the moral as well as the natural image of his Maker. But the test of a new probation, by which man may be lifted out of his fall and immutably established in a new righteousness created within him must be something fitted to his moral infirmity. It can no longer be a doing or a not-doing, the exercise of the native powers of a pure moral nature controlling all lower motives. The new Christian probation is therefore fundamentally different from that of the first man or of the angels.

1. They were still in the original perfection of their moral nature; he is fallen in sin.

2. They stood by the exercise of that perfection in virtue; he must be saved out of his sins by grace.

3. They entered on their probation by the original constitution of their nature; he solely by the provisions of redeeming grace.

4. They, so far as we know, terminated probation by one act of sin; he must work out his salvation with fear and trembling as a worker together with God who worketh in him to will and to do of his own good pleasure.

And yet this new probation beginning in utter moral helplessness and rising by successive gifts of prevenient and growing grace, through the most

elementary stages of moral and religious life is regarded by St Paul as more excellent. The first terminated in sin, this in salvation, nay more, a reign of grace through righteousness unto eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

We are now prepared to follow the inner process by which probation is realized in the spiritual life of each individual. The light of Divine truth and the power of the Holy Spirit reaching each man in his own measure in the gracious providence of God produce—

1. Conviction of sin. This which is purely a work of Divine grace not made conditional in its origin upon any moral act of the sinner, we find at the foundation of all probation, and of the entire process of individual salvation. Thus the work of John the Baptist preceded that of Christ. Thus Christ Himself began by preaching repentance. So in Paul's ministry, repentance toward God precedes faith. In Peter's preaching on the day of Pentecost, the first result looking toward salvation was "They were pricked in their heart." So of Paul and the Philippian jailor, the first indication of their new life is this conviction.

The instrument of this conviction is the truth; but truth applied by the power of the Holy Spirit, making it in this way more than the natural power of the truth. By this influence of the Holy Spirit the human conscience is not only awakened to a sense of right and wrong, but it is brought into the immediate presence of God. Conviction is thus not a physical process,

nor yet a purely ethical or moral process. It is essentially religious. It is conviction not only of wrong as against moral law, but of sin as against God. It is indeed an awakening of conscience, but it is a placing of that conscience, nay more of the entire man in his religious sense as well as his moral nature before the bar of Divine judgment. So Paul presents it in the second chapter of Romans.

This conviction while wrought thus by the Spirit and the truth within comes from without ourselves. The convicted sinner is clearly conscious of this. Often he would gladly put away the troubling thoughts, but finds that he cannot; they follow him in spite of his resistance. It may indeed come to a man who is in the way of seeking the truth, but then it is a more advanced moral state, as we shall see presently, and represents a more advanced stage in the process of human probation. But the earliest conviction, that which first fully awakens a man to a sense of his sins, lays the foundation for the first great moral act, but does not necessitate it, and must not be confounded with it. To that we next turn.

Corresponding and answering to this work of grace from without, wrought upon all men who come into conditions of responsibility is the proper probational response from within the man. God's biddings are God's enablings; to God's voice we are called to hearken, and to listen is itself an act of—

2. Decision; it is the will yielding itself to the convictions of God's Spirit. When this act of yielding or decision is completed it becomes what is known in the New Testament as conversion, *i.e.* the turning of the whole man and the whole life from sin to God and His service. It is put before us in the New Testament in a variety of forms, sometimes the turning about of those who have been living in open sin, sometimes the coming of the weary and heavy laden to the meek and lowly One for rest, sometimes the cry of the earnest awakened heart, "Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?" Sometimes the cry of awakened alarm, "What must I do to be saved?" Sometimes it is receiving Christ or His truth, at other times it is obeying the truth, or the Gospel. But whatever may be the form of its expression or the variety of conflicting emotions which may accompany it, it is essentially the first response of the human heart to God's grace, a response not in itself saving, or completing probation, but looking and leading thereto.

Conviction and conversion as the first step toward salvation are expanded into contrition, confession and consecration. Contrition is conviction perfected after the act of decision, and opening up to us the true moral state of our heart and past life in its relation to God. It corresponds in religious emotion to conviction in the conscience. Confession is also a religious act, it is contrition taking practical form, or expressing itself in the acknowledgment of our

sins before God. Consecration is the abjuring of all sin and the yielding of our whole heart and life to the Divine service.

These elements of conviction, conversion, contrition, confession, and consecration, taken together, constitute

Repentance.

Repentance includes the Divine side of all prevenient grace, and the human side of all response to that grace either in emotion, intention, or action. It is thus something granted of God, and yet commanded to man. The Greek word signifies a change of mind—*i.e.* view, intention, and direction of one's outer and inner life. In this broad sense, as covering the whole ground of prevenient grace and man's response thereto both moral and religious, repentance and faith are presented as a summary of the gospel way of salvation. So Paul toward the close of his ministry sums up his gospel testimony as "repentance towards God and faith towards our Lord Jesus Christ." But this very relation and association implies not so much a contrast or antithesis as a deeper spiritual unity in which they are inseparable the one from the other. Repentance already includes a germinant faith, and faith can only spring out of a penitent heart, and carries repentance forward to perfection. Hence true repentance is even already saving. God's grant of repentance is "unto life"; "godly sorrow worketh repentance unto salvation." It thus becomes the primary and universal proba-

tionary condition of salvation. Wherever man is found, there at least repentance is necessary unto salvation, a condition the lack of which condemned Tyre and Sidon and Sodom, but which saved Nineveh; which now is commanded to all men, and concerning which we have the assurance that in every nation he that feareth God and worketh righteousness is acceptable to Him.

Repentance as thus presented in the New Testament is the gift of God through Christ by the work of the Holy Spirit. For this God raised up His Servant and sent Him to bless us, in turning every one of us away from our iniquities. It is thus a universal provision for men, granted to Israel as well as remission of sins by the exalted Prince and Saviour, but also granted to the Gentiles as a gift to which the goodness of God would lead even the worst of sinners who in his blindness is despising it, but which may become a terrible "peradventure" to those who oppose "the knowledge of the truth."

But while thus from the one side presented as the gift of God, from the other it is commanded as the duty of man. It is unnecessary to multiply scriptural illustrations of this, as they may be found everywhere in the Word of God. John and Christ Himself, Peter and Paul, the sermon on the day of Pentecost in Jerusalem, and that delivered from Mars Hill at Athens, all unite in commanding all men everywhere to repent.

Finally, it is perfected by its fruits. These are the proof of its reality. No violence of emotion

or turbulent physical or mental indications of earnestness and sincerity can supersede this. Lydia, whose heart was quietly opened to the Gospel, and whose house was opened to His dishonoured and suffering servants, was as much accepted and honoured of God as the jailer who "roared by reason of the disquietude of his soul." This supreme test of repentance grows out of its progressive character. It is not the work of a day. A Paul indeed in three days passed on to a higher stage, but it was after years of the experience described in the seventh of Romans. It often moves slowly from step to step of the light of the Spirit and the learning of the truth before it culminates in the full salvation provided in the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.

It is to be noted that in this entire study of the probation of prevenient grace the work of the Holy Spirit and the truth precedes. Our salvation is thus of God. The assent of the will is but man's submission to God. This is the true monergism which makes the work of the Holy Spirit both first and indispensable. It is at the same time the true synergism, demanding the full probational yielding of our will. Grace is always first, but will must work with grace. But it is not mere natural will, but will graciously enabled by the very grace with which it co-operates. But at the same time it is not constrained will, but free will, and hence probational because capable of resisting the Spirit. Hence the just condemnation, "Ye will not come to me that ye may have

life," the awful possibility of "quenching the Spirit," and "resisting the Holy Ghost." Even to "grieve" him is grievous sin.

But while repentance thus constitutes a true and universal probation, it is only preliminary, germinal, and leading to Christ. Preliminary in its negative aspect of turning from sin; germinal as its faith is only incipient and latent, implied rather than consciously exercised, leading to Christ, as Christ is the end of this faith and alone can perfect the receptive disposition which it evinces. But this probation is still imperfect, and is itself tested by the clearer light of the Gospel which is the final judge of all men. Hence Christ alone is the final judge of the world, as faith in Him is the true central and crucial point of the Christian probation.

Compare the case of Cornelius, Acts x. 4-5, 35-43.

Excursus on the Psychology of Moral Action.

Two erroneous theories:

1. That an outward occasion of action being present one or more motive desires arise. That action arises out of these desires as effect from cause or motion from force—the act being the mean resultant of the desire.

2. That an outward occasion for action being present, desires moving to action arise. That will acts as umpire among these deciding not of necessity to the stronger desire or to the mean result, but by independent self-action.

The first theory does not acknowledge the duality, the antithesis, the ultimate choice in action of which every man is conscious in himself and on which he bases his sense of responsibility.

The second theory supposes will to act without cause, or as we say in moral things, without reason, and hence contradicts the universal law of sufficient cause.

The first theory by placing all human action under the category of necessitated effect would destroy all moral character. And it asserts a truth that every act of will has its reason.

The second theory seems to deny reason or rational character to moral action, and yet it asserts a truth that moral action cannot be necessitated, and that in ourselves lies the whole blame or praise that it was not other, and that we were able to make it other, not only physically but morally so able.

Certainly the truth contained in each of these theories must be recognised and the error avoided. First of all let us look at an act performed under the impulse of a single motive, good, bad, or indifferent. It is seen at once that it has no conscious moral character. It is instinctive. It is done without consideration. If good we admire the natural goodness, but do not recognise in it the strength of virtue. If bad we may abhor the devilishness, but blame the man for the abnegation of his reason and conscience. He did not think, but he should have thought. For the development of true moral action, reflection, con-

sideration, that is, a balancing of motives is necessary. Let us then look at an act where two opposing motives come into play giving opportunity for power of alternate choice. Two apples, a sweet and a sour, are offered, which shall I take. Sweet, because to me sweet is more attractive. Here was power of alternate choice, but not moral act. It is evident that simple power of alternate choice, no matter how full may be the consideration, does not in itself constitute responsibility or moral action. What then is moral action? Let us take a clear and simple case. A boy passing a fruit-stand desires the fruit, has the opportunity to take it, resists because it is not right. Here is indeed alternate choice perfectly free so far as outer circumstances go. Here are opposing motives set over against each other. To do or not to do, that is the question. But the antithesis is a special one. It is not simply one motive against another, but the moral motive power, the conscience, against a lower motive power, the physical appetite, and the moral act is the rule of the higher nature. Now this rule of the higher nature implies effort, assertion of the right that is within ourselves against things that reach us from without. In like manner reason may act as a basis of higher action as against passion, appetite, etc. Reason appeals to truth. Conscience to right or duty. We see thus that moral action is not some inexplicable outgoing of will to choose on this side or that, but it is simply the assertion of the higher self, that which discerns

truth and right in its dominion over the lower elements of our nature. Immoral action is the failure of that assertion. The moral will based on conscience and reason acting in view of truth and right is that which creates moral good. Probation is the condition in which this action of the moral will begins to work from the basis of natural goodness or that which we have received by constitution of nature. Probation therefore implies—

1. The possibility, *i.e.* the basis of doing right, *i.e.* conscience and reason, truth and right apprehended as a basis of action.

2. The possibility of doing wrong, *i.e.* the presence of some object appealing to some lower desire, opposing conscience and forming the basis of a contrary choice or act to which we may yield for lack of assertion of the higher nature. This lower desire is not necessarily in essence evil, but becomes evil in relation, as opposed to conscience or reason, *i.e.* to right and truth. Probation is that condition in which effort is necessary for the assertion of the higher nature.

3. There are limits to probation. (*a*) If the strength of moral nature is such as overrides all lower motives without effort so that right is done as if instinctively then probation is terminated by moral perfection. On the other hand, such a force of lower motives as virtually amounts to compulsion likewise terminates probation or renders it further impossible.

4. The probational test or act must be con-

sidered whether works or faith. There is an important distinction between these two as conditions of probation. We have seen that there are two distinct standpoints from which probation is possible. The one is that of will inclined to right in a state of innocence with an external occasion of testing appealing to some lower desire which forms the antithetic basis for choice. Here the doing right, the act of will standing firm in the choice of right is the condition of success in the termination of probation. The other is that of a will inclined to evil and under penalty, but with a merciful drawing from without awakening conscience and so forming the basis of alternate choice. Here it will be seen that the proper probational response is not the exercise of the depraved will, but its submission in an act of trust to the holy influence from without. In the one case the probational condition is the holy self asserting itself and maintaining itself against the evil from without. In the other it is the unholy self yielding, renouncing self and trusting to the holy influences from without. This act which is known in the Christian religion as faith is thus in the very nature of moral relations the proper and natural probational response to the right and good for a fallen creature. It is in fact the only response possible. To assert the depraved will would be to stand fast in sin, just as for the unfallen to assert his holy will is to stand fast in righteousness. But as to Adam in innocency it was still possible in his probational state to yield to sin, so to fallen

man it is possible under the probation of grace to yield to God. In each case the volitional act is a negative rather than a positive act. It is a weakening rather than an assertion of power, but in each case it has in it the probational element. It puts us on the side of right or wrong with our own consent or assent.

We are now prepared to consider the process of probation in which this element of assent or faith, this fiduciary act is fully perfected from its first potential germ.

CHAPTER II

FAITH AS THE TEST OF THE NEW PROBATION

As we have described Repentance as the first stage in the new Probation for salvation, we may consider Faith as the second stage. At the same time it is presented in the religious teaching of Christ and His Apostles as the essential condition of salvation; "By grace have ye been saved through faith." "He that believeth not is judged already because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God." The Christian salvation is certainly conditioned on the act of faith which accepts Christ. But the Epistle to the Hebrews goes further and makes faith the germinal principle of all religious life in all ages and dispensations, and hence the universal condition of probation. As we have already found that faith is the germinal and saving element in repentance, and as we shall hereafter find that faith working by love is the foundation of all probational action in the higher Christian life, faith becomes thus under the redemptive system, the distinctive and universal probational test; first under all imperfect moral conditions, the faith of the penitent; under the Gospel, personal faith in Christ, in the developed

Christian life, carried into effect through loving service, manifested in all good works. This faith is thus a thing of living growth. In the Gospel is revealed a righteousness of God, "from faith unto faith," and, "We through the Spirit by faith wait for the hope of righteousness." Without this progressive development in all holy life faith dies; hence James says, "Faith apart from works is dead." The faith thus set before us may be described as a spiritual attitude of the soul, a receptive state of mind, referred to by our Lord when He says, "Except ye turn and become as little children, ye shall in no wise enter into the Kingdom of Heaven." The implicit faith of the penitent prepares for the special act of justifying faith, which is impossible to the impenitent soul. And justifying faith, accepting Christ, lays the foundation of and passes up into the matured faith of the permanent Christian life.

Faith as a state of mind is the result the influence of the Word and Spirit of God. "Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God." But faith, as a probational act, is the probational use of the grace thus given. The Philippian jailer felt the power both of the Word and the awakening Spirit when he cried out, "What must I do to be saved?" and he was brought to the test of a probational act when it was replied, "Believe on the Lord Jesus, and thou shalt be saved, thou and thy house"; and when baptism was placed before him as the outward and visible sign of this act of faith.

Such an act of faith may be implicit, as in the case of the man with the withered hand, who showed his faith by stretching forth his hand, or the woman of Syrophœnicia, whose answer revealed her wonderful faith. In the more advanced Christian life, there is a continuous repetition of these acts of faith, both implicit and direct. In fact the whole course of Christian probation is described as a living by faith, walking by faith, faith working by love, and faith overcoming the world.

But this general principle of faith has its distinctive representative acts in every dispensation of saving grace, and in fact in each individual life. Abel's faith was shown in his sacrifice, Noah's in his preparing the ark; Abraham's in leaving his country; Moses' in his choice of the afflicted lot of Israel. The Mosaic economy provided for the national expression of faith in the great festivals, and for the individual expression of faith, in the varied personal offerings. A similar provision appears in Christianity under the Sacraments. But to each individual Christian the probational test in his personal experience is that offered by Paul to the Philippian jailer, and is known in theology as

Justifying Faith.

This faith is a step from the broader and more general moral and religious faith of the penitent or of the seeker after God to a more specific religious faith in God and Christ. It is, further,

a specific act of faith, the object of which is the historic Christ, in His mediatorial office, and which seeks from Him the personal forgiveness of sin.

1. The verb used in the New Testament expresses a moral and religious act, an act of reposing trust or confidence. Like all faith it is spoken of as faith in God. Thus immediately after his conversion the Philippian jailer is spoken of as having believed in God. But it is most frequently spoken of as believing in Christ, and in His name. No more exact expression of this can be cited than the language of Peter to Cornelius, "To Him bear all the prophets witness, that through His name every one that believeth on Him shall receive remission of sins"; or thus by St Paul, "to him that worketh not, but believeth on Him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is reckoned for righteousness." In a single passage the attention is directed to the atoning work of Christ, as with Himself the object of faith, "whom God set forth a propitiation through faith by His blood." The predominant New Testament presentation of this faith is thus personal trust in a personal Saviour.

2. This act of trust is for the remission of sins. It is pre-eminently the act of the convicted sinner. Whether presented as an outward act, expressing in the ordinance of baptism the inward and spiritual act, or directly as faith required for salvation, it is by both Peter and Paul presented to the sinner as the direct way to relief from the conscious burden of sin. So in the first sermon Peter says,

"Repent ye and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ unto the remission of your sins"; and in the sermon to Cornelius and his friends, though here he is dealing with men who have long been devout servants of God, he says, "To Him give all the prophets witness, that through His name every one that believeth on Him shall receive remission of sins." So again Paul's commission is given him that the Gentiles "may receive remission of sins and an inheritance among them that are sanctified by faith in Me." And his own outward act of faith is expressed, "Arise and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on His name." Whether, therefore, faith is expressed by the outward symbolic ordinance of baptism, or as an inward mental act, its direct object is the forgiveness of sins. St Paul's enlargement of this in the Epistles to the Romans and Galatians is well known.

3. It is an act by which we especially receive or accept Christ as our Lord and Saviour. This is expressed in the New Testament by almost every variety of expression. Thus St John combines receiving and believing, "To as many as received Him, to them gave He the right to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on His name." As thus receiving Christ, Paul makes it the entrance upon a permanent relation to Him governing our whole lives: "As, therefore, ye received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in Him, rooted and builded up in Him, and established in your faith, even as ye were taught,

abounding in thanksgiving." Again with Paul it is receiving the Gospel in which we are to "stand" and by which we are "saved."

4. It is an act of obedience and self-surrender. Hence it is called by Paul "obedience of faith" and "obeying the Gospel." It thus widens out to a more comprehensive idea, "Ye became obedient from the heart to that form of teaching whereunto ye were delivered; and being made free from sin, ye became servants of righteousness." Just before he has expressed the same act of faith as a self-dedication to this obedience: "Know ye not, that to whom ye present yourselves as servants unto obedience, his servants ye are to whom ye obey."

5. It is not a meritorious, but an instrumental act. This Paul asserts when he says, "By grace have ye been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, that no man should glory. For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works which God hath afore prepared that we should walk in them." And again, "Where then is the glorying? It is excluded. By what manner of law, of works? Nay, but by a law of faith." We have already seen how faith becomes the appropriate probational test for one who is morally helpless, and to whom salvation must come through grace. Such test is truly moral as well as religious in its character, as we shall see presently. But an act may be probational, and even morally right, and yet not meritorious

in the sense of desert of positive reward. There is that which it is only our duty to do. There is even that which not to do would be folly or sin even to malignity. A meritorious act stands on a higher moral platform, and is the work only of a fully-developed moral nature. At the last it may be ours to hear the words, "Come ye blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world, for I was an hungered and ye gave me meat," etc. But even then, so deep must be our consciousness of the gifts of grace as set over our feeble works, that such a reward is scarcely conceivable. But at the outset faith as a purely receptive act can pretend to no merit. It is simply the hand of the suppliant stretched forth to receive. And yet—

6. It is a truly probational act. Probational on the negative side because its absence is full proof of the evil choice. "He that believeth not is judged already, because he hath not believed on the name of the only begotten Son of God. And this is the judgment, that the light is come into the world, and men loved the darkness rather than the light, for their works were evil. For every one that doeth ill hateth the light, and cometh not to the light, lest his works should be reproved." Unbelief is thus the rejection of light and truth and the choice of evil. And is even probational on the positive side, because the reception of the light implies the choice of good, and though that choice still needs to be finally established, and to that end must advance to the

higher stages of moral action, even already the man who thus believes is not judged for his coming to the light puts him in the way of doing truth and works which one day will be fully "manifest that they have been wrought in God." Hence the man who thus believes passes out of death and condemnation, and "cometh not into judgment, but hath passed out of death into life." The believing reception of the truth has admitted into the soul the seeds of eternal life, for this is life eternal, "That they should know Thee, the only true God, and Him whom Thou hast sent, even Jesus Christ." He that thus "believeth hath eternal life." The act of faith which accepts Christ, though without merit, as a purely receptive act, is yet fully a moral act, placing us on the side of truth and right and of God and Christ, and hence is truly probational under the Gospel dispensation of Salvation. As Christ stands at the door of each heart and knocks, the opening or closing of the door decides eternal destiny.

We may now turn to consider the place of this act of justifying faith in the inner probational life of the Christian.

1. It follows repentance. The implicit faith of repentance must prepare the way for its more definite and conscious faith. It would not be proper to prescribe any definite measure or outward form for this repentance, before faith can be exercised; and yet in some sense penitence must have its perfect work. At least, true conviction, the penitent attitude of conscience, and

true decision, the penitent attitude of will, are essential. The other elements may vary according to time and circumstances, and of all God alone is judge. The power of this higher faith is His gift and comes to the prepared heart.

2. It is distinctly based upon and appropriates to itself the promises of Christ as set forth in the Gospel, more especially the promises which offer to us the pardon of sin.

3. The act of faith is itself a taking possession of God's gift. "Believe that ye have received and ye shall have." It hence leads directly to the next element in the Christian way of salvation by which it in turn is perfected as faith.

Assurance.

Faith as we have thus described it, while from the human side it is an act of yielding the will, the trust, and the allegiance of the heart to Christ, has in itself an element of assurance. It is "the assurance of things hoped for, the proving of things not seen." But we have seen that in its very effort after these unseen things it rises toward possession. Assurance is the full possession, faith bringing the unseen into spiritual sight. It is the perfection of that intuition of God's love to us sinners in Christ that was already germinant in faith. This intuition is the work of the Holy Spirit in its incipient, as well as in its perfect form. There is an assurance, *i.e.* a certainty of truth in conviction itself which is wrought in the conscience by the Holy Spirit. So in justifying

faith there is an assurance of the promises. The provisions of mercy are all in Christ, are seen by the light of the Spirit to be so certain that the soul casts itself upon them with strong confidence. It is only on the basis of this assured certainty that the moral act of faith becomes possible. This again is the work of the Holy Spirit opening up to the soul first the light of right and then the light of mercy in Christ, and finally the full light of God's redeeming love. It is this full work of the Spirit that is spoken of in the New Testament as the gift of the Holy Ghost and the Witness of the Spirit. "Because ye are sons, God sent forth the Spirit of His Son into our hearts, crying, 'Abba, Father,'" and "Hope putteth not to shame; because the love of God hath been shed abroad in our hearts through the Holy Ghost which was given unto us."

In using the term intuition to represent this certainty or assurance of faith which underlies even the incipient forms of faith, it is not intended to assert that it is innate or independent of communication from without. It comes to us by the promises of the Divine Word, but the Holy Spirit so applies these that as they are presented assurance springs up within. This convincing power of the Holy Spirit carries our faith forward from one step of our salvation to another, and the assured faith of each step becomes the basis for the higher faith which reaches to the step beyond until the revelation of God's love is perfected in our hearts.

But while this element of assurance runs through the whole religious life and is its very foundation as a living by Divine truth, and is throughout the work of the Holy Spirit, the term is especially used of that measure and form of assurance which follows justifying faith. It is clearly the teaching of the New Testament that the Christian is not to rest in any imperfect hope, or uncertain confidence as to his relation to God through Christ; but that it is his privilege to know that he has passed from death unto life, to be justified by faith; to know now that he is a child of God, and that his sins are forgiven for His name's sake. This assurance is presented by the New Testament both as direct or intuitive, and indirect or verified.

The direct assurance or immediate conscious knowledge through the Holy Spirit of God as our Father is expressed in such a passage as Gal. iv. 6: "Because ye are sons, God sent forth the Spirit of His Son into our hearts, crying, Abba, Father." The indirect assurance or verification of our direct confidence is presented in 1 John iii. 14: "We know that we have passed out of death into life because we love the brethren;" and to such verification we are exhorted by St Paul, "Try your own selves whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves."

Assurance under both these forms lies in and constitutes the Christian consciousness; but in the first case that consciousness is turned directly

toward the love of God. In the second case it is introspective and puts to the test of the Word our own moral and religious character. It is the first form of assurance which is the immediate answer of the Spirit to our faith. Both may be referred to in such passages as Rom. viii. 15, 16: "Ye received not the spirit of bondage again to fear, but ye received the spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father. The Spirit Himself beareth witness with our spirit that we are children of God;" and Eph. i. 13, 14, "In whom, having also believed ye were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, which is an earnest of our inheritance unto the redemption of God's own possession, unto the praise of His glory."

Both aspects of this assurance are thus by St Paul included in that baptism of the Holy Spirit which was the common experience of all believers in the Apostolic age and which is so often referred to in the Acts and the Epistles.

Difficulty is sometimes experienced by the young Christian in distinguishing faith from assurance. It is quite unnecessary to perplex ourselves with this question. Assurance is the gift of the Spirit, faith is our act based upon that gift and is enlarged by a still fuller assurance. Both meet in consciousness, but in faith we consciously turn toward God, and in assurance which is God's answer to faith the promise fills us with joy and peace in believing. Hence assurance becomes the channel of all the fruits of the Spirit appearing in our conscious inner

life, "love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance. These all have their root in love, and as John teaches, "we love God because He first loved us."

The gift of the Spirit which brings to us the assurance of God's love thus introduces us into the full possession of the blessings of salvation as provided for us in Christ, and to the consideration of those we next turn.

CHAPTER III

THE ESTATE OF SALVATION

THE Christian man who has thus entered into possession of the salvation which is in Christ Jesus stands in a position of pre-eminent moral privilege, in a new relation to God, and is endowed with a corresponding holy character. He has entered upon this estate through a marked crisis of moral and religious experience, including three prominent elements, repentance, faith, and assurance. This crisis in the New Testament history of the Apostolic Church always appears as distinctly marked, and is a great transition from the state of sin, darkness, alienation from God and spiritual death, to the new state of salvation, reconciliation, light, and life in Christ. This transition is the work of the Spirit and Word of God, with such probational yielding of our will and of faith as God has made possible to the sinner through His prevenient grace. Under the Gospel dispensation this transition becomes all important. All other dispensations resting in the penitent fear of God and in the service of preliminary probation are without this marked experience of Christianity, or enjoy it only as an exceptional privilege and a prophetic anticipation

of the good things to come. But under the Gospel the preparatory probation of repentance is but an embryonic condition, as in biology we still find the higher orders of life passing for a little time through forms of life that are the full normal type of lower orders. But to the Christian this embryonic condition is but the passing through the necessary preliminary to that moral new birth through which we become in the Christian sense the sons of God and members of Christ's body.

The new relation upon which we thus enter is one unspeakably great and glorious. To it St Paul applies the prophetic words of Isaiah: "Things which eye saw not, and ear heard not, and which entered not into the heart of man. Whatsoever things God prepared for them that love Him," and adds, "But unto us God revealed them through the Spirit."

The estate of blessings of salvation which we enjoy through the Gospel is emphatically a matter of revelation. It was revealed to the Church and to the world at Pentecost through the gift of the Holy Spirit. On that day first the hundred and twenty and then three thousand others through their preaching entered into its possession. Its revelation was at the same time a living experience in the hearts of men saved from their sins. And the revelation is repeated in the living experience of every sinner who through repentance and faith enters upon its possession. In each of our hearts Christ must be thus revealed

the hope of glory. We thus enter at this point upon the study of Christianity as a living fact known and read of all men, known of each Christian man in the conscious experience of his own heart, and known to the whole world by its living fruits. Where these fruits are clearly manifest scepticism can scarcely find place. The living Christian brings all the facts and principles and teachings of the Christian religion to a test in concrete form.

And yet, like all things in which man takes part, the concrete example is imperfect. The perfect ideal is that given by the inspiring Spirit at the beginning, and that ideal of what every Christian should be we have set before us in the Apostolic writings. It is an ideal which can be understood only by the light of the Spirit in individual experience. The ideal presented in the Apostolic Word and interpreted through our personal though imperfect experience is thus to be our source of truth here.

To present the greatness, the fulness, and the glory of the Christian's estate of salvation the Apostles exhausted almost every conceivable form of analogy and illustration. But historically they were led to three lines of presentation, which though originally and even yet tropical or metaphorical in their character, have entered into all our Christian doctrine and given vocabulary to Christian theology. These terms are doubtless the best that the language of man can afford or the mind of man conceive. And yet it must not

be forgotten that they but illustrate the things of God after the analogy of human things, and that the different human types represent not separate and independent things, but only different imperfect human views of what is one to the perfect thought of God. When we speak of justification, adoption and calling, or election, we too often regard them as separate and distinct acts of God, instead of considering them as they are, as one fulness and indivisible unity of grace and mercy in Him.

The three analogies under which the estate of salvation is presented to us in the New Testament are drawn from the three greatest things in human life. These are the family, the State, and the temple. These are in one respect, it is true, more than analogies, for these were not first and independent, and God's things conceived after their likeness; but the Divine things were first and the earthly modelled to represent them. The earthly were made after the pattern shown on the Mount. The Divine authority is the source of all human authority, "there is no power but of God." God is "the Father from whom every family in heaven and on earth is named"; and as of the New Jerusalem "the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple thereof," so the eternal place of Divine worship and service is in God Himself. But as the eternal things have been translated into these outward and visible things on earth, so the earthly and visible help to lift our thoughts to the spiritual and eternal.

Under each of these three representations, the State, the family, and the temple, we have in regard to our salvation—

1. An act of God's mercy as supreme in each.

2. A new relation in which we are placed to God. This relation is at once religious and moral and probational.

3. A correspondent change of inward character, and new obligations of life.

The threefold analogy is thus carried out each in its three elements as follows:

(1) The supreme act of God's saving grace is called—

(*a*) Under the analogy of the State, a justifying from sin.

(*b*) Under the analogy of the family, an adoption or begetting again into the family of God.

(*c*) Under the analogy of the temple, a calling or election as the Lord's consecrated ones for holy service.

(2) The new relation to God is described in the same way:

(*a*) Justification or righteousness, the true relation of good citizens to government and law.

(*b*) Sonship or the children of God.

(*c*) Saints or a holy people.

(3) The corresponding character and life is described—

(*a*) By the adjective righteous and righteousness.

(*b*) As the renewing of the Holy Ghost and walking in love.

(*c*) By the terms holiness and sanctification.

In this threefold presentation of God's relation to us our relation to God and the corresponding character and life, the first analogy deals with the ethical aspect of religion as based upon the conscience. This was represented to both the Greek and Hebrew mind, and especially in the Roman world by the State, the civil authority and the law. Paul especially enlarges upon this aspect, though by no means to the exclusion of the other two. For this he was peculiarly qualified, not only by his knowledge of Roman law as a Roman citizen, but more especially by his legal studies as a Pharisee and Jewish lawyer.

The second deals especially with the religious affections, and centres in love. John as the apostle of love, the one who leaned on the Lord's breast at supper, the one to whom the Master on the Cross had said, "Behold thy mother," especially expands this aspect, reaching its climax in those wonderful words, "God is love."

The third is the side of action, consecrated service. Peter the Jew, the Apostle of the Circumcision, the man who went up to the temple at the hour of prayer, enlarges especially on this side of service, borrowing his language almost entirely from the Old Testament.

In the theological language of the schools these three presentations of salvation are known as Justification, Adoption, and Sanctification. In

our technical theology they have frequently been defined in a narrow sense as if justification were limited to the pardon or remission of sin, and adoption added to this the positive admission into the favour and family of God. This was followed by Regeneration, or the new Birth, the change of inward character; and this again by sanctification, including the holy life and the growth in holy character. These narrower definitions will scarcely bear the test of New Testament usage. There, where the language of Christianity was still in the formative stage, the words still held their touch with the historical institutions from which they were derived and the broader and more varied application natural to writers who had not yet constructed a technical theology, but borrowed the terms from the familiar institutions of human life.

In an inductive study of the religious truth of Christianity, it is perhaps safer to abide by the New Testament usage. While therefore with the New Testament writers we may retain the terms justification, adoption, regeneration, calling, election, sanctification, and holiness, we shall classify them under the presentation of salvation to which they belong, using justification, adoption, and sanctification as the three leading terms.

Justification.

This term is largely employed by St Paul, and in its more limited sense almost exclusively by

him. It is not strictly a forensic term as has been generally supposed. The Greek word is a term of ethics rather than jurisprudence, and corresponds to the Hebrew *tsedeq* and *ts'dakah*. With the Greeks it had entered, perhaps, even more into their religious conception than into jurisprudence, as may be seen from the writings of Plutarch. To the Hebrew mind it had been interpreted by the teaching of the Pharisees whose aim and boast was the attainment of righteousness. This teaching was familiar to St Paul, in fact his whole life up to the time of his conversion had been fashioned by it. It, therefore, very naturally entered by way of antithesis into his conception of Christianity. It was to him a new righteousness bestowed by God, not of works lest any man should boast.

Justification is thus to the mind of Paul not a mere metaphorical term borrowed from human courts of justice and to be interpreted by forensic methods of procedure whether in Roman or other law, but a term of ethical religion derived from the theology of the straitest Jewish sect. To them right relation to God, *i.e.* conscious rightness with God, was to be attained by perfect fulfilment of the works of their law, which was not a mere political law nor yet a system of ethics, but a theocratic law placing the whole nation in direct relation to God. Justification or righteousness, therefore, was essentially to him right relation to God, not as before any metaphorical bar of judgment but as manifest in his own religious con-

sciousness. The doctrine of a future judgment added intensity to this consciousness and kept it alive when endangered by the busy things of the world. But we have only to read the second and the seventh of Romans to see that what Paul seeks is righteousness in our conscious relation to God. In the first of Romans he proves what the Pharisee would readily admit, that the Gentile world under the light of nature are without this righteousness. In the second chapter he proves the same of the Jews, on the same principle, their lack of conformity to the moral law showing that their boasting is due to moral blindness. He summons all before the bar of conscience and of moral law, that "every mouth may be stopped and all the world may be brought under the judgment of God." If men will but open their eyes and consider their works in the light of moral law, they must see that by works of law no man living can be justified. Paul in this attack upon the Pharisaic doctrine of righteousness is following the very spirit of the teaching of Christ, who in the same way pronounced the Pharisees hypocrites and blind leaders of the blind, and exposed their inward moral rottenness which they endeavoured to conceal by outward ceremonial works, and a narrow verbal interpretation and fulfilment of law. In the seventh chapter he illustrates this by his own experience, where not the letter of law but the spiritual law, as soon as he came to understand, or, as he puts it, it came home to him, stirred up his sinful

nature within and brought him consciously under sentence of death. Paul's whole conception of righteousness was thus not forensic after the ideal of Roman law, but religious; a right relation to God of which conscience must bear witness. Hence when he himself came into possession of this righteousness by faith in Christ, he writes: "Our glorying is this the testimony of our conscience, that in holiness and sincerity of God, not in fleshly wisdom but in the grace of God we behaved ourselves in the world."

This righteousness, as presented by St Paul, is the result of God's free grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus. It is not attained by outward and formal compliance with law, not even the Jewish theocratic law, but by faith in Christ. It is thus bestowed by God as a definite gift in time and so received by each individual believer in Christ. It must not be confounded with the merciful grace which, through the gift of His Son, provided salvation for a lost world. It is an individual blessing bestowed in time upon individual men. To the sick of the palsy it was as distinct and individual as the healing of his body, for He who said, "Arise, take up thy bed and go to thy house"; said first, "Thy sins are forgiven." It is something still to be received by the three thousand penitents on the day of Pentecost, when Peter says, "be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus unto the remission of your sins." So Paul called God "the justifier of him that hath faith in Jesus."

In its essence this gift bestowed by God and received by men is pardon, the forgiveness of sins. So Paul in illustrating this blessing from the experience of David quotes the words, "Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven and whose sins are covered. Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not reckon sin." But this pardon restores to full and gracious acceptance with God for "Being justified by faith we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ."

This gracious pardon is bestowed and received through the mediation of Jesus Christ, "Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith by His blood." "We are justified through His blood," "reconciled to God through the death of His Son"; God "reconciled us to Himself through Christ." Such are the expressions by which Paul connects this grace with the mediation of Christ. It is conditioned on faith, and so linked into the new probation. This faith is specifically known as justifying faith, and has already been considered as the specific probational test under the Gospel.

Finally its full assurance is received in the gift of the Holy Ghost. It was as remission of sins was offered and accepted by faith that the first Gentile converts received the gift, and of these Peter says afterwards, "God who knoweth the heart bear them witness, giving them the Holy Ghost; even as He did unto us." This justification, or remission of sins, or reconciliation to God, stands thus as the direct and immediate result of

the great probational crisis of repentance and faith under the Gospel.

Corresponding to the Divine act of forgiveness so manifested in the conscience, and attested by the Holy Spirit, is a new permanent relationship to God in Christ Jesus. This is expressed by the noun δικαιοσυνη, righteousness, in the writings of St Paul. In the other New Testament writers this word denotes either the character established by a right life, or the right course of life by which such character is established. Paul uses it about sixty times, and always seemingly in this sense of conscious right relation to God. He associates it with freedom from condemnation, with peace with God and joy in the Holy Ghost. He frequently calls it righteousness of God, not as God's subjective righteous personal character, but the genitive of origin, the righteousness which comes from God, which is His gracious gift to men. This use of the term seems to be without exception in the writings of Paul.

By this term St Paul sets before us the Christian state as one of conscious rightness with God, hence as a state of strong manly confidence toward God, as freedom from the servile spirit of fear engendered by the law. Hence he exhorts the Galatians, "With freedom did Christ set us free: stand fast, therefore, and be not entangled again in a yoke of bondage." Here, perhaps, is a passing reference to the Roman law of status comparing this new estate to the "libertas" with which a slave was made a freedman. It is this

new and blessed estate, not only of rightness before God, but also of Christian moral liberty, which serves God in newness of spirit and not in the oldness of the letter which Paul contrasts with his old Pharisaic status, and counts all his advantages under the law but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus his Lord.

The relation of this right moral status to right character and right life is obvious both in our moral nature and in the teaching of the New Testament. Paul exhorts, as we have received Christ Jesus, so we should walk in Him. Those who are in Christ Jesus, freed from all condemnation, "walk not after the flesh but after the spirit," and so "the ordinance of the law" is truly "fulfilled in them." The right moral relation strengthens the whole spiritual man for the right life before God. The law as stirring up our moral nature was weak through the flesh. But what it could not do God has accomplished by the propitiation made by His Son, "cleansing our conscience from dead works," in the words of the Epistle to the Hebrews, "to serve the living God."

It will be observed, however, that in the New Testament treatment of justification, while the right life and the right character are associated with it through the cleansing of the conscience and the gift of the spirit, and the entrance of the justified man upon a spiritual service, the emphasis is laid on the act of God and the new relations in which the sinner is thereby placed to Him. It is more especially these aspects of salvation which

Paul treats in opposition to the legal theology of the Pharisees, and these aspects the term is best fitted to set forth. The new nature and the new life are more fully set forth under the other analogies. This would seem to justify the Protestant theology in its emphasis upon justification as a change of our relation to God. But if that emphasis leads us to overlook the fact such relation is inseparably associated with a change of nature and of life, whether expressed by a related or by an entirely different word, then our more limited definition may lead us to serious practical error. In God's order there can be no separation of the three elements of this salvation, God's gracious act, our new relation, and our new character and life.

Adoption.

Preliminary Historical Note.

Prior to the rise of the Protestant theology the scholastic theological conception of this aspect of salvation centred around regeneration. This was associated with the sacrament of baptism, and constituted its saving efficacy by an operation outside of consciousness, of Divine power rather than moral influence. Through this sacramental efficacy the guilt of both original and actual sin was cancelled, and the germ of new life implanted. At the same time the person so re-

generated was made a member of Christ's body the Church. The awakened sense of sin, repentance, faith, acceptance with God, as well as growth in all the graces of holiness, were fruits of this sacramental regeneration. Calvin, who first worked out a system of Protestant theology, transferred this secret operation of regenerating grace to the elect either with or without the intervention of the sacraments. The results of this grace, followed in repentance and faith and through faith justification as the pardon of sin and conscious acceptance with God was bestowed. Adoption and sanctification as a progressive renewal of the nature followed. This introduced two important Protestant elements of doctrine; first, religious individualism, the right and responsibility of each individual for personal access to God and personal relation to God in Christ. This was done by placing less emphasis upon the mediating Church and sacraments and more upon the operation of Divine grace in the individual soul. Secondly, by giving greater emphasis to faith as the immediate antecedent or condition of justification and adoption. Both these changes tended to bring the process of human salvation out of the region of mysterious operation of grace into the sphere of conscious moral and probational influence, and at the same time to develop more fully individual responsibility and direct relation to God in which true religion must essentially consist.

The evangelical Arminians, especially Wesley

and his school, made a very important advance in the development of these Protestant principles, an advance which has leavened the theology of all evangelical Protestantism in our time.

1. By separating prevenient grace from regeneration, making it the universal influence of the Spirit and truth upon the minds of men for their salvation, and finding in it the foundation for a true renewal of human probation in Christ.

2. By making repentance and faith the true probational works, based upon prevenient grace, and making them the true probational conditions of the full blessings of salvation, including regeneration as well as justification, adoption, and sanctification.

3. By emphasising the doctrine of personal assurance of salvation, thus bringing the foundation of the Christian life back to its New Testament form, of a concentrated crisis of religious experience beginning with conviction and ending with the gift of the Holy Ghost in its two elements of assurance and regeneration. From this follows the permanent Christian life. It will be seen that this perfects the Protestant principles—

1. By founding the whole process of salvation upon God's revealed truth applied by the Spirit.

2. By bringing this process fully into the sphere of conscious moral influence and activity, and hence of true probation and conscious personal relation to God.

3. By making faith in Christ the true and only

condition of salvation, and an act of true probational responsibility, entirely unfettered by any secret decree or unconscious operation of invincible grace, whether sacramental or otherwise. The individual is thus brought into direct personal and responsible relations to God.

We may now turn to the New Testament presentation of that aspect of salvation which finds its symbol in the family. Of all presentations of our salvation this is the most prominent and the richest. Our Lord Himself pre-eminently revealed God as our Father in heaven. One of His most beautiful presentations of the salvation of a sinner is the return of the prodigal son to his father's heart and home. The very foundation of the Christian faith is that He is the Eternal Son who is in the bosom of the Father and reveals Him.

When we come more specifically to the blessings of salvation, we find in all the writers of the New Testament a wonderful variety and richness of terms drawn from this relation. These terms are sometimes drawn from the Hebrew laws of family life and from the Hebrew idea of the chosen people as collectively God's Son: "When Israel was a child, then I loved him, and called my son out of Egypt." Into this relation to God of His chosen people the Gentiles were admitted by religious rites of purification which were known to the Jews as the new birth. This term our Lord borrows, but at once raises to a

higher, a profoundly real, a universal, and a spiritual significance. Not the Gentile alien alone, but the Jewish ruler, devout and sincere though he was, must be born again, otherwise even he cannot enter into the Kingdom of God. This new birth is not a mere ceremonial purification of the body by water baptism. "Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the Kingdom of God." "That which is born of the Spirit is spirit." The foundation which was thus laid is carried through the Apostolic teaching associated with the gift of the Holy Ghost and the ordinance of baptism as the outward expression of that faith upon which this gift is conditioned, and itself the symbol of the inward renewal wrought by the Holy Spirit.

Upon this doctrine of our Lord associating the Sonship with the chosen holy people and with admission into their fellowship by a new birth from above, Paul builds directly, calling upon the new people of God to separate themselves from all uncleanness, and applying to them the promise of Jeremiah, "I will be to you a Father,

"And ye shall be to me sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty."

But in Paul's mind it appears also under a new illustration drawn from the Roman law of adoption, by which an alien became a member of the family. The Divine grace by which the sinner is accepted in Christ is an adoption into the family of God. Christ came "that we might receive the adoption of sons." And the Spirit by which we

are at once assured of this sonship, and so renewed that we are restored to the likeness of our Father, is called the spirit of adoption as well as the spirit of God's Son sent into our hearts, "crying Abba, Father." Thus Paul enlarges the Hebrew idea by the analogy of the Roman law, and makes it more personal and individual, at the same time that it is in the closest relation to the spiritual teaching of Christ, since the adoption is accompanied by the regenerating power of the witnessing Spirit, who is thus "the spirit of adoption."

To the simple Hebrew idea Peter returns. To him, after the type of the Old Covenant, the chosen people of God are "an elect race," the enlarged family idea, "a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God's own possession, that ye should show forth the praises of Him who hath called you out of darkness into His marvellous light"; "which in time past were no people, but now are the people of God, which had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy." Into this chosen race "the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ," according to His great mercy, "begat us again unto a living hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead." "And we were thus begotten again, not of corruptible seed (that is, generations of men subject to moral decay), but of incorruptible, the Word of God which liveth and abideth." So St James: "Of His own will begat He us by the Word of Truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of His creatures."

It was finally left for St John to gather up all these ideas into a perfect whole, and dropping the limitations of human forms and analogies, to make them a living, and as nearly as human thoughts can grasp or human language express, a literal setting forth of God's relation to us and our relation to Him. Paul had already exhausted all human analogies when he called God "the Father from whom every family in heaven and on earth is named." But John lays his foundations first of all in the idea that "God is love." Side by side with this is the conception of "the only begotten Son which is in the bosom of the Father," and by whom He is revealed. Next is God's love to us which "so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on Him should not perish, but have eternal life." And to those who thus believe on His name, this Son "gave the right to become children of God." And it is with this golden line of love coming out of the depths of the eternal being of God, and reaching us through the infinite self-sacrificing love of His own Son, before Him, that the Apostle exclaims, "Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us that we should be called children of God, and such we are."

This whole subject of Adoption is thus unfolded in the Apostolic age, not as a hard dogma of the schools, but as a living, joyous religious faith. It affords a marked illustration of the power of religious faith to penetrate to the pro-

foundest truth of real being. No truth to-day has deeper hold of the world's heart than that which is here revealed. Let us now turn to the more special analysis of this New Testament conception of salvation.

1. Like Justification this aspect of our salvation is grounded on the mediation of our Lord Jesus Christ. It is Christ that gives us right to become the children of God. God sent forth His Son "that we might receive the Adoption of Sons." Adoption is equally with justification an aspect of the work of Christ in our salvation. Justification represents God's free grace or mercy. We are "justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus." Adoption represents His overflowing love. He "foreordained us unto adoption as sons through Jesus Christ unto Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will, to the praise of the glory of His grace, which He freely bestowed on us in the Beloved."

Like justification, adoption is conditioned on faith. "As many as received Him to them gave He the right to become children of God, even to them that believe on His name."

Again, as with justification, adoption is ministered through the Holy Spirit, which in consequence is called the spirit of adoption as He is elsewhere called the spirit of grace and the spirit of holiness. Our adoption is thus called receiving the spirit of adoption, and God's gracious act is a sending forth of "the spirit of His Son into our hearts crying Abba, Father."

We may thus define adoption as the gracious act of God, through Jesus Christ, conditioned on faith, wherein for Christ's sake, He accepts us as His children, and by His spirit attests the Father's love to our hearts.

We may now turn from the Divine act of acceptance to the new relation and privileges in which we are thus instated. Paul's term υἱοθεσια, borrowed from Roman law and custom, perhaps rather expresses the Divine act of grace. But if so, in the term, as in the expression, sons of God or children of God, is bound up a new and abiding relationship to God. And as the conscious outcome of justification is an abiding sense of "peace with God," so that of the Sonship is the spirit of joyous hope.

We have Paul's presentation of the privileges and obligations of this relation in Rom. viii. 14-17. It is the privilege not only of a joyous confidence toward God, but also of a Divine kinship which makes all things ours as we are Christ's and Christ is God's. It turns even sufferings into glory, making all things work together for good to them that love God. And it involves the responsibility of "walking after the Spirit," "for as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the Sons of God."

Another presentation we have in 1 Pet. i. 3-5 and 13-23. There again the privilege is "a living hope," and "an inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you, who by the power of God are

guarded through faith unto a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time." So also the obligation is to be "children of obedience," to "be holy in all manner of living," to "pass the time of our sojourning in fear," to "purify our souls in obedience to the truth unto unfeigned love of the brethren, from the heart fervently." And St John in his own way repeats almost the same ideas. "To be called children of God" is the gift of the wonderful love of the Father. And as children it is not yet made manifest what we shall be; but "we know that if He be manifested we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him, even as He is." And again the obligation follows: "Every one that hath this hope in Him purifieth himself, even as He is pure." The child of God is called to a sinless life. Thus with each of these New Testament "pillars" this aspect of salvation is one of religious affections. Like justification, it demands right life, but it does so not so much from the side of conscience and moral law as from that of love. The service to be rendered is not only pure, holy, right, but the joyous loving obedience of children as well. Our life is a preparation, not only for a day of final righteous judgment, but also for a day of glorious heritage of the kingdom prepared for us by our Father. In these words our Lord combines the two aspects of our relation to God in Christ Jesus our Lord, as it will appear in the great consummation.

We may now turn to the third element in this aspect of our salvation. As justifying grace not

only places us in the right moral relation toward God, but with the assurance of this grace gives us new and right intention towards God, working in us and through us the right life, so the grace of adoption brings to us the spirit of filial love. Because He first loved us, we love. Love begets love; God's love revealed by His Spirit creates a new and holy human love. The children must indeed be like the Father, sinless; but more than that, they must be "imitators of God as beloved children, and walk in love as Christ also loved us, and gave Himself up for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God for an odour of a sweet smell." Our humble service of love as children is thus like the great oblation of love of the only-begotten Son Himself, an offering and a sacrifice well-pleasing to God. The love of God created in our hearts by the Holy Spirit is thus the fountain of the entire new life, and itself the supreme element of the renewed nature. Thus with Paul it stands at the head of the fruits of the Spirit, "Love, joy, peace," etc., and is "the fulfilling of the law."

Thus our salvation, whether viewed as justification or adoption, brings with it not only a new relation to God, giving rise to varied new elements of religious faith and service, but also a new heart for that service. In Christ Jesus we, who were dead through trespasses and sin, are quickened together with Christ. In Christ we are new creatures. The old things are passed away; they are become new. We have put on the

new man which is being renewed unto knowledge after the image of Him that created him, and after God hath been created in righteousness and holiness of truth.

In this entire presentation of the work of the regenerating Spirit under these two aspects of our salvation it is clearly spoken of as a definite past event, taking place at a known past time, and a matter of definite conscious experience to the members of all these churches. This is indicated, not only by the aorist tense, which is almost uniformly used in these references, but also by the entire manner of speaking of it. It stands before us as a part of that blessed experience conditioned upon and following repentance and faith by which we become members of Christ, and saved through His grace.

The modern conception which has been so fruitful of results in the evangelistic and missionary work of the century seems to be the conception of the New Testament. The other conception appears largely in history from the third century onward; while not perhaps absolutely fatal to the work of salvation through Christ, it seems seriously to obscure both its nature and its operation. By substituting occult processes for the definite moral influences set forth in the New Testament it certainly makes the Christian religion less spiritual in its methods if not in its results.

Sanctification.

The third great aspect of our salvation contemplates God's saved ones, not as individuals justified before God, nor as a family of spiritual children, but in a collective capacity as a church, or house, or temple, in which God is to be served and worshipped, and which all His people are set apart as priests to minister His worship and service and thereby to save the world.

This analogy is not taken from religious worship and temple service at large, but is based upon the ancient and separated people and upon the Mosaic institutions. In this way it is a comparison of spiritual things with spiritual, and so gives us not a mere analogy or typical representation of God's grace, but real principles of God's method of grace, wrought out in the history of the ancient people in a more earthly form, but perfected in spiritual character, power, and method of work under the Gospel.

This presentation of the religion of Christ enters very largely into the conceptions of the leading New Testament writers. Peter, Paul and the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews especially give it prominence, and it enters largely into the imagery of the Apocalypse.

In one sense it furnishes the highest aspect of our salvation inasmuch as it regards us no longer as individuals, but embraces us in an eternal purpose of God, which runs through all the ages, extends to all nations, takes in all human history,

and receives its final consummation in the eternity out of which it springs.

The terms which are used to describe this new view of God's saving grace, and of our relation to it, and of the consequent new life and character, are remarkably rich and varied. A large class of them are borrowed from the Old Testament and from the ancient people of God, and the service of the temple and the tabernacle. But another class of them, used almost exclusively by St Paul and those influenced by his teaching, belong to a form of thought more speculative in its character, and the historical relations of which, if such exist, have not yet been traced. The questions of God's purpose of the ages and his foreordination or predestination scarcely appear in the Old Testament. The nearest approach to them is perhaps in the Book of Ecclesiastes. But even there the problems presented are rather those of the reasons of particular events, rather than the formation of one grand concept of all things as the perfect plan of God. The same is also true of the Book of Job. From Paul's own language we judge that this was through the inspiring Spirit—his final contribution to Christian thought, at once a religious faith and a philosophy.

To understand this new point of view it is most important to observe that the terms by which it is expressed as well as the problems which it involves grow out of the change of dispensations.

We have already seen how under the teaching of Peter, Paul and John, salvation comes to each individual on distinctly probational terms, as God's pardoning mercy and adopting grace. These blessings come to Jew and Gentile alike, for there was no difference, all were alike sinners, and if justified or purified at all, must be so by faith. Peter and Paul alike recognised this. Both also recognised that the people thus saved by faith were the true Israel of God, that to them and to them alone were applicable in the true and spiritual sense all the terms which belonged to God's ancient chosen people. But at this point they parted and Paul passed beyond Peter. To Peter as to Paul the men who were saved by faith in the name of Christ and had received the witness or seal of the Holy Ghost purifying their hearts by faith were indeed the true "Israel," or to use Peter's own words, the "elect race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God's own possession"; and to them was now committed the mission of the ancient Israel, "that ye may show forth the excellencies of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvellous light." Peter also with Paul recognised the rejection of the unbelieving from this true Israel and the mercy which, through the Gospel, was now admitting so many from the Gentile world who before had not been a people, to a share in the blessings of the covenant. But in all this Peter so far as we know saw no break in the validity of the ancient dispensation; no transfer of God's

promises and purposes to a new body. He would have kept the new wine with all its new spiritual life in the old vessels. He would still go to the temple at the hour of prayer, and religiously make the old institutions of Moses the vehicle of the new faith, adding thereto the simple sacrament of Christ. Paul saw that this was impossible in itself, unnecessary inasmuch as the believer was "complete in Christ," and to his inspired faith contrary to the Divine purpose. But this involved the ending of the Mosaic institutions as waxing old and ready to decay. It was in reality the rejection of the ancient people, as the great majority of them refused the Gospel. It involved the cessation of the Mosaic worship, at least as acceptable to God, and its replacement by the pure, simple and spiritual worship of Christianity. It was in fact the replacement of God's ancient people by the new Christian Church largely taken from the Gentile world, and the transfer to this new body of the covenant promises and privileges in the purpose of God.

Under this view of Christianity as not a mere continuance and extension of the Old Dispensation, but in itself a New Covenant founded on better promises and replacing the Old, there arise the great problems of the unity and harmony of the purposes of God in the world's salvation. These problems he discusses in the ninth, tenth, and eleventh of Romans, and their solution in what he calls the dispensation of the mystery

which from all ages hath been hid in God who created all things.

This mystery thus unfolded to Paul was not a mysterious necessitarian doctrine of individual salvation, utterly inconsistent with his teaching of individual salvation through a truly probational faith on the one side and with the broad views of the universal character of the provisions of the Gospel which were the glory of his teaching on the other; but it was a revelation to him of the fact "that the Gentiles are fellow heirs, and fellow members of the body, and fellow partakers of the promise in Christ Jesus." In other words, it was that *the entire body of the Gentiles* who, under the old dispensation, were "separate from Christ, alienated from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers from the covenants of the promise, having no hope and without God in the world, are made nigh in the blood of Christ." It was that Christ hath now broken down the middle wall of partition, and hath abolished the law of ordinances which was against the whole Gentile world separating them from the Jews. Or, as he puts it in another place, he nailed this hand-writing of ordinances which separated Jew and Gentile to His cross. It was that out of both Jew and Gentile He is creating "one new man in Himself so making peace."

It will be seen that all this, while it relates to the way of human salvation and brings every saved sinner into new religious relations, is a predestination, a purpose, a foreordination of

God, not that this sinner shall be saved and that sinner left in his sins, but a purpose that in Christ Jesus the entire Church shall be constituted upon this broadly universal and spiritual basis; and when he speaks of this and the other body of Christians as being thus predestinated, he is but pointing to them as an individual historical example of this broad and universal purpose of God in Christ.

This doctrine of Paul, so far from being opposed to his doctrine of a true ethical and religious probation for every man under the universal provisions of the Gospel, is absolutely essential to it. Before Christ came the Jews stood in a position of peculiar advantage, the Gentiles in another and far inferior position of probational advantages. Now the new probational terms of the Gospel are freely open to all, and all the promises of Abraham are offered to Jew and Gentile alike. This is the only true universalism and probational equality.

But to return once more to the new body of God's people thus formed. In that body every man saved through faith in Christ finds his place; therein he is called; he becomes thereby one of God's elect; and all the privileges and responsibilities of this calling and election become his. This gives rise to a completely new view of personal salvation, linking it with God's "eternal purpose" as to the world's salvation and the body of His people through whom that salvation is to be accomplished. Into the fulfilment of that

purpose every individual Christian is called, and his highest probational responsibilities are associated with his position as one of God's elect people.

Under this highest of all its aspects our salvation includes—

1. A calling and election of God as one of His chosen people.

2. An estate of high privilege and responsibility into which we are thus introduced.

3. An inward and outward life of holy service by which we truly fulfil our office. This is the New Testament doctrine of sanctification or holiness.

1. The calling and election of the holy nation or royal priesthood.

This call lays the foundation for a visible and active organisation of God's people in the world. It is the public or outward and visible side of religion, as justification and adoption represent the inward and personal. It brings the individual, who through faith in Christ is pardoned and accepted at the very same moment by the same Divine act of grace, into the unity of the body of Christ or the fellowship of the Saints. The terms used, calling and election, are borrowed from the Old Testament or rather from the later Old Testament, though the facts upon which they are founded date from the call of Abraham. This call from the beginning was inseparably connected with God's purpose for the world's salvation. The promise to Abraham was, "In

thee shall all the families of the earth be blessed." He was to be the agent by which God's purpose for the world's salvation is to be accomplished.

Under the Old Testament, this man, his family, the nation descended from him, are called and chosen, and through them the purpose of God is carried forward in that nation until of its stock Christ was born. It is clear that the individual members of this nation stood each on his own personal probation before God. Many were not such as could finally enter into the Kingdom of God. The individual religious life of the best of them was often imperfect, and their sense of individual responsibility as God's chosen people equally defective. The holy seed, the substance for the Divine purpose was often a small remnant. Among these again there was special calling and election. Such were the whole line of the prophets from Samuel onwards, and such were great leaders and instruments of God as Moses, Joshua, David, and Zerubbabel. The calling especially of these was not without probational conditions, both of the individual and the nation, and a Saul was rejected and again the great body of the people at the captivity. But as yet the individual spiritual life was not sufficiently developed to call each individual to an active part in the great work of the Divine Kingdom. The nation as a whole was called, and its great national movement was directed, and its leaders religious and even political were called and endued with the Holy Spirit for their work, but as

yet the great body of the people were but the material of the chosen people, and as Paul says they were not all Israel who were of Israel. But the time was to come when upon all the people the spirit should be poured out when the servants and the hand-maidens should prophesy, and when the feeblest should be as David, and the house of David as the angel of the Lord. When Paul transfers the terms calling and election to the Christian Church, he clearly intimates that this new age has arrived and that now the calling and election are not by fleshly descent, but by inward spiritual relationship. Hence the children of Abraham are the men "who walk in the steps of the faith which he had" even before he received the covenant ordinance. "They which be of faith the same are the sons of Abraham." This historical development makes clear the fact that the relations and method of God in election were fixed by the wise and righteous purpose of God as Paul sets forth. This calling and election is God's purpose of providing the world's salvation through man, a purpose which includes Christ Himself as pre-eminently God's elect servant, and the spiritual head of the whole elect people who are "chosen in him."

On the other hand when this privilege is linked with individual salvation and so extended to every believer, we see that it becomes thoroughly probational, making it necessary for each individual to give all diligence to make his calling and election sure.

The Divine call which we are now considering, and which is co-ordinate with if not synonymous with election, is not thus the simple Gospel offer of salvation. In only one passage is the word "call" so used, and there it is clearly distinguished from election. Elsewhere the word "called," "the called of Christ Jesus," "called to be saints," like "elect in sanctification of the Spirit," is used as a designation of those who have accepted the Gospel offer of salvation. Their calling is not thus the offer of salvation, but a "high calling in Christ Jesus" parallel with their justification and adoption, in fact another aspect of the same Divine grace. This unity of the three is clearly set forth in Eph. i. 3-7, where the blessings bestowed "in heavenly places in Christ Jesus," are enumerated as "adoption as sons," "redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses according to the riches of His grace," and "choosing us in Christ before the foundation of the world that we should be holy and without blemish before Him in love." The choosing in Christ is first because it is Paul's chief theme in this epistle as we have already seen.

This calling is generally the high claim which God makes upon us for His service, which is not only supreme duty and responsibility, but supreme privilege as well. It is a "call into the fellowship of His Son Jesus Christ our Lord." It is a calling which demands that we "walk worthy of it." It is a calling not of the rich and noble and wise, but of things despised of men but honoured of

God. Hence it is, in the first place, essentially a call "to be saints" or to be "fellow citizens with the saints." This term saints is used everywhere in the New Testament to designate believers as in the fellowship of the Church. The very term ἐκκλησια, "called out," denotes this calling perhaps quite as much as the mere call to assemble in worship. Of this calling, saintship, the state of those set apart for God is the result.

The Divine act by which God saves His people now stands before us in all its fulness.

(1) God pardons our sins and bestows upon us His justifying grace, giving us peace with God in our conscience.

(2) He adopts us into His family as children, revealing His love in our hearts by His Holy Spirit.

(3) He makes us members of His elect people, and calls us to the high responsibilities and privileges of His saints.

This Divine act of saving grace in Christ, which is one and inseparable, is set forth in its fulness in Eph. i. 3, etc. This Divine act implies on our part a corresponding consecration of ourselves to this high service, and to this consecration Paul exhorts in such passages as Rom. xii. 1. The analogies of the Old Testament service are largely applied to this aspect of salvation, especially in the Epistle to the Hebrews, more particularly the sprinkling of the blood of Christ and the anointing of the Holy Spirit.

2. The estate of responsibility upon which we

thus enter is largely described in the New Testament. As we have already seen, the designation most frequently used is that of SAINTS. This title or the one which we shall next consider is used by Paul in the address of every epistle to a Church or body of believers. In some the two, Saints and the Church, are combined. It is thus not so much descriptive of character as of the calling, the responsibility of this high estate and relation to God. Of some who were thus addressed Paul was obliged to say that they were yet carnal.

This term corresponds to two words in the Old Testament used to designate the chosen people. The first, *Chasidav*, describes them as the objects of God's favour; the second, *K'doshav*, as separated for His service. The New Testament idea is built upon this, though it presents a remarkable advance in the spirituality of its conception of the nature of the service required and also in its ethical perfection. Under the Old Testament this service was sometimes one of war, the execution of judgment upon all the ungodly; in the New Testament it is only a service of peace and salvation.

The second designation employed to describe God's people in this relation is *The Church*. The saints are the individual members of the Church as a collective body. As the idea of the Church becomes so important in the Christian dispensation it must be considered separately, and we need not enlarge upon it here. It is only necessary to

note that being called into the membership of the Church is in the New Testament an important element of our salvation, as there alone can we be in the full and true sense God's people.

An assembly of titles is used by Peter of this relation to God, titles drawn from the Old Testament, and all in harmony with the main ideas already presented. But apart from these titles, one has only to note the enthusiasm with which Paul speaks of the high privileges of God's people, in the Epistles to the Romans, Corinthians, Ephesians and Colossians, to see that this is regarded by him as the very crowning mercy of our salvation in Christ. Equally emphatic is he in presenting the responsibilities of this high estate, and in this he is followed by the other New Testament writers.

The estate of salvation into which we are admitted by the mercy of God in Christ is thus before us in its varied elements.

(1) A state of righteousness and peace with God.

(2) A state of Sonship, members of God's family and brethren in Christ.

(3) A state of consecration to God's service in which we recognise that individually and collectively we are not our own but His, being called to glorify God in our bodies and spirits which are His.

3. God's call, election and anointing, like the spirit of adoption creates a new heart within for this holy service. Our sanctification is not merely

formal, a new and holy relation to God, but a new heart and a new life. "Being made free from sin, and become servants to God, we have our fruit unto sanctification and the end eternal life."

This holiness is especially set forth as something to be perfected, as a progressive work both in heart and life. This is never said of our justification or adoption or regeneration. They are completed through faith in Christ Jesus and the gift of the Holy Spirit. Believers still need to be established in heart unblameable in holiness before God our Father, to be sanctified wholly as well as preserved without blame. They grow into a holy temple in the Lord. They are renewed in the spirit of their minds and "put on the new man which after God hath been created in righteousness and holiness of truth." It is thus that the Christian character is completed in its threefold aspect. The right intention, the filial love, the consecrated will, the new conscience, the new affections, the new purpose of life, all purified by the Holy Spirit and the truth. These blessings of salvation are concurrent in time, but in order of thought they stand Justification, Adoption, Sanctification. In each God acts, His grace is first and is all; each is of our high calling and privilege, right with God, sons of God, fellow-citizens with the saints; and each is an aspect of the new nature in Christ Jesus.

All centre in the gift of the Holy Ghost. This seals our pardon, witnesses our adoption, and anoints us for holy work. Our salvation is

thus one in God, in Christ and in the Holy Spirit, and yet Justification is more especially ascribed to God (Rom. viii. 33); Sonship to Christ (Pro. i. 12); and Sanctification to the Spirit (1 Pet. i. 2).

CHAPTER IV

CHRISTIAN ETHICS

THE estate of salvation into which we are introduced by faith in Christ becomes the starting-point of a new life involving all moral and religious obligation. Between these Christianity knows no distinction; all moral duty becomes religious duty and all religious duty is enforced by conscience with the full strength of moral obligation. The new Christian life thus both includes and extends the highest moral life.

In the study of Christian Ethics as a part of Theology it is not necessary to enter into minute detail of particular duties, whether moral or religious. This is the less necessary as Christianity is in no sense a merely formal religion or a system of legal precepts of moral duty. It is in its very essence a religion of the spirit and not of the letter. It is distinguished by its fulness of spiritual life and not by rigid forms.

This new life takes up into itself the highest ideal of moral goodness as well as the supreme authority of moral obligation, as they are found in the moral nature of man, but so transforms and enriches these that they become in reality a new nature and a new moral life. At this point it

will be our duty to define generally the new elements which Christianity introduces into moral life. These form the distinctive features of Christian ethics.

All ethical obligation is founded on relation and natural endowment. The first determines those to whom we owe our duties, and the second defines the extent of those duties. We have already seen that the salvation which is in Christ places us in new relations and bestows upon us a new nature. In these very facts it lays the foundation for a new ethical development. Christian ethics by introducing our relations to God into the field of obligation, if nothing more, vastly enlarges that field. We shall see presently that it completely transforms it as well. All religious service becomes duty and all duty becomes the highest religious service as God's holy will. Not in outward forms and rites do we truly worship God, but in doing justly and loving mercy and walking humbly with God. "If ye love Me keep My commandments" is the final instruction of the Master; and the interpretation of His beloved disciple is this, "If we love not our brother whom we have seen how can we love God whom we have not seen." It is by this very unity of morals with religion that the strength of moral obligation is immeasurably increased, the authority of conscience reinforced.

There are four views of the nature and authority of conscience.

1. That it is the hereditary result of biological

evolution from sensations of pain and the corresponding feeling of fear. According to this theory, conscience can only augment its authority slowly through the ages under the lash of suffering. In this there is no *ought*, only a *must*, or at best a *should*.

2. That it is an ultimate element in our nature which we need not account for. This shows no way to give it new strength, no spring of new or higher moral life.

3. That it is the result of the evolution of the moral nature of the universe. This does give hope, but not to the individual. He is bound in the inflexibility of a universal movement.

4. That it is the voice of God within. This at once gives it a force of obligation, and an individuality and a fountain head of new moral life, and by linking conscience with religion renews and strengthens conscience with all the energy of the new religious life. God is not only Creator, but King, Judge and Father. The whole ethical life is by this unity of morals with religion placed upon a new, and that the very highest, basis.

The peculiarities of this new Christian ethics may be considered under the following topics :

1. The standpoint from which all duty is conceived.
2. The motive in moral action.
3. The ideal of the good.
4. Moral development.
5. The spheres of ethical activity.

The Standpoint of Christian Ethics.

In ethical philosophy we find two essentially divergent tendencies. The one is exemplified in Hedonism or Egoism, the other in Altruism. The first makes the individual self the starting-point of all ethical consideration. This does not imply that the consideration of others is excluded, as I am bound up with them and they with me, in considering myself, I must consider them. In seeking the best for myself I must seek the best for the whole, because I am part of it. But my obligations to others are secondary, my obligations to myself primary ; my individual self is the pivot around which the whole field of moral obligations centres.

Altruism, on the other hand, forgets self in the consideration of others ; and its starting-point is the rights of others, and my obligation to meet them. Self-interest and even obligation to self is subordinate to this.

In determining the starting-point of an ethical system we have by no means determined its complete development. An egoistic system may preach even the doctrine of self-denial, of justice, and of mercy, not so much from the standpoint of obligation to others, but, as in Buddhism, as the only way to freedom from sorrow in ourselves. In this and also in some other systems, we have the paradox of a perishing ego building its whole ethical life from the centre of this fleeting personality. Its ethical motive is very much the same as that of the man who lives to save his soul, for-

getting that according to Christ's teaching, he who is ready to sacrifice it for duty truly gains it. From such a standpoint duty is the right thing for self.

The starting-point of all true Christian ethics is God. The will of God is to the religious heart the supreme ideal of right, and the glory of God is the supreme end of action. The love of God is the highest of all motives. This starting-point of ethics is far superior to either the altruistic or the egoistic in the following respects:

1. The idea of God is the highest that man can form. It includes all goodness and all perfection. This is true even of the man with the most inferior ideals. God is at least his highest conception. The will of God thus lifts a man to the best that is in him, and at the same time affords the fullest scope for moral advancement.

2. The end and motive presented from this standpoint are the most impartial possible, and the most comprehensive possible, including all other true ends, and all other right motives. All things are God's, and His glory is the highest well-being of the universe, and the love of God includes the love of all His creatures.

3. It secures all that is rightly proposed from either other standpoint, and far more perfectly than is possible from this limited outlook. As God's child, living not for self but for Him, it becomes my duty to seek the highest perfection of my being for His service. As my fellow-men are also God's the same follows of them.

4. At the same time it affords the true cor-

rective to selfish passion, and to the weakness of too indulgent passion towards others. Its first requirement is self-denial, and by bringing all things before the supreme bar of the universe, it secures both egoism and altruism from weak, one-sided and limited views. The great commandment, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart and with all thy soul and with all thy strength; and thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself," gives us a starting-point for all moral action surpassing all human points of view.

Motive in Christian Ethics.

The teaching of the New Testament, as well as our best philosophy, emphasizes the fact that there is ethical quality in motive as well as in act. By motive here we mean not the objective thing which excites desire, but the desires or affections so excited as they tend to action. Christ laid the ethical foundations of His work in the Sermon on the Mount by teaching us that there are right and wrong desires and passions as well as actions. The desires are, it is true, not the direct product of the will, but spring from within ourselves. But Christ's teaching makes us responsible for the evil that we are as well as for the evil that we do. The grounds, the nature, and the limits of this responsibility form a special subject of study which belongs to natural as well as to Christian ethics, and which we cannot discuss here. We need here only point out the fact that the moral quality of motive

is emphasized in Christianity as in no other system. Other systems praise virtuous character and benevolent affections, placing them beside noble actions in the catalogue of the moral good. But as Christianity judges of the moral quality of all action in relation to God, who knoweth the secrets of the heart, so not outward results, or prescribed rules of outward act, but inward motive, intention must form the basis of its judgment. All its moral service is religious service; and in religion only the right heart is of value. "God is a Spirit, and they that worship Him must worship Him in Spirit and in truth." All life becomes, in its highest ideal, worship; and every act of life must be done in "Godly sincerity" in "Spirit and in truth," and so offered as a living sacrifice to that God who is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. The ethical value of all holy action lies in the purity and perfection of motive.

Again by creating a new affection or group of affections centering in charity, Christianity itself supplies the highest and most perfect of all motives for human action. Paul has clearly seen and taught that this single motive, the Divine principle of love, may become the spring of every conceivable moral action; hence he says "Love is the fulfilling of the law." This motive not only incites to all duty, but it perfects the performance of all duty. Every moral act finds its richest and most complete perfection in that it is done with a loving heart. Even the most severe virtues are ennobled and beautified by charity. This charity,

so comprehensively set forth by our Lord in the great commandment already quoted and expanded in such rich detail by Paul in the thirteenth of first Corinthians, becomes thus a most distinctive feature of Christian ethics. Here Buddhism falls far below Christianity. It catches but fragments of the supreme motive of charity, and even its abnegation of lower passions is not from charity, not the infinite loving self-sacrifice of Christ, but the deliverance of self from sorrow.

The Christian Ideal of the Good.

Building upon these foundations of right motive and right starting-point for the apprehension of duty, the perfection of the moral life will next be moulded by the clear, intelligent, broad, apprehension of duty in all its manifold details. This general outlook over the field of our duty constitutes the Christian ideal of the perfect man in Christ, or, if taken abstractly, of the supreme good. To a church conspicuous for its beautiful exemplification of the Christian moral character, Paul puts this ideal thus: "Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honourable, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, if there be any praise, think of these things." Such an ideal every moral system must have. It is the superior man of Confucius, and the Noble Path of Buddha, and the *Summum Bonum* of the Græco-

Roman philosophies. Christianity presents us with such an ideal in various forms, some of which are unique, and all vastly superior to the moral ideals of other systems.

1. The life of Christ, the God-man, the sinless man presents it in concrete form as a living example. The importance of the life of Jesus as an example of perfect goodness was fully appreciated by His disciples, and indeed to it our Lord Himself had called attention in those gracious words: "Come unto Me all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn of Me; for I am meek and lowly in heart; and ye shall find rest unto your souls." Again He puts it from a single but fundamental point of view in these words: "If any man would come after Me let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow Me." So Paul emphasizes the "mind which was also in Christ Jesus"; and Peter the example of Christ, "that ye should follow His steps, who did no sin, neither was guile found in His mouth"; and John exhorts him "that saith he abideth in Him, himself also to walk even as He walked." The importance of this living example of the ideal life, and the influence which it has exerted, can only be appreciated by the careful study of the history of Christianity in the inner spiritual life of its best men.

2. The whole teaching of our Lord is filled with precepts of Christian duty. In fact, the predominantly ethical character of that teaching

has at times led men to overlook the fact that it is no less religious than ethical, and that this new ethico-religious life must be built upon a new foundation of faith. Similarly, every epistle of the New Testament abounds not only in single moral precepts, but in extended passages, some of them giving important and comprehensive summaries of Christian duty. No one can thoroughly grasp this Christian ideal of duty who has not made an extended study of the New Testament with this one point in view, and classified for himself the thousands of precepts of right-living which it contains.

3. Our Lord Himself has condensed this ethical teaching in three forms, each of which demands attention as a moral ideal. Taking them in the order of expansion, we have, first, the Golden Rule. "All things therefore whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, even so do ye also unto them; for this is the law and the prophets." These last words indicate that Christ is here consciously and intentionally giving us a universal rule of duty, one that includes the complete spirit of the law and the prophets. We may say with confidence that it is impossible for the mind of man to devise a more perfect rule of universal moral obligation than this. It is purely ethical, *i.e.* it appeals directly and only to our sense of right, as the next one which we shall present appeals to our religious feelings. But it makes this ethical appeal in such a way as to present each act of life to conscience in such light of com-

parison that there can be no escape from a candid moral judgment. A man must lie to his own inmost soul before he can escape the moral accuracy of this rule; and such a lie is in the very constitution of his being impossible. He may deceive his own conscience, but not his consciousness. But this perfection of moral discrimination is equalled by the universality and facility of its application. It is a rule of duty, short and simple, always ready to hand, and yet, like a two-edged sword, it divides soul and spirit, joints and marrow.

To our Lord's second presentation of a universal moral law we have already called attention as the two great commandments. These two precepts our Lord does not announce as new. He is asked for "the great commandment in the law," a question frequently discussed among the scribes, and in reply He selects these two, one from Deuteronomy and the other from Leviticus, where their context gives them a very limited application, and does not in any sense constitute them precepts of universal and all-inclusive moral duty. But this our Lord clearly makes them when again He says, "On these two commandments hangeth the whole law and the prophets." He has given them a new and universal significance, and in this higher meaning they are not Mosaic, but Christian. Of the perfection of this law we have already spoken under the head of the Christian motive to duty.

Our Lord's third presentation of Christian duty is the Sermon on the Mount. Here we have the

most effective exhibition of moral ideals ever presented to the world. It is most effective in its power of awakening the consciences of men. Only in our own time are the men of the living world beginning to appreciate its high moral ideal, and to ask themselves, with a tinge of despair in their tone: "Is it possible to live up to it?" But it is no less effective in capacity of application to every conceivable relation in life. By happy aphorism and by concrete example it sets forth principles which cover the whole field of moral and religious duty. Of the depths of its spirituality as applying the law to the hearts, as well as the lives, of men, we need not speak again.

4. Following the example of his Master, St Paul has given us several exhibits of the most important elements and principles of Christian duty. The Epistles to the Romans, Ephesians, Colossians and Philippians are distinguished by the comprehensive ethical summary with which each is concluded. The twelfth chapter of Romans is a classic passage in this respect. But the Pauline passage which has impressed itself most deeply upon the heart of Christendom is the thirteenth of first Corinthians. In this hymn to charity he sets before us the supreme ethical and religious spirit of Christianity, and he exhibits it as the greatest of eternal things. It is not a new ethical ideal or spirit, for it is the very mind of Christ, as He talked and prayed at the last supper and on the way to Gethsemane, and as He hung upon the Cross. It is only the presentation which is

new, but in all literature we know not another such, in which the very soul of goodness is portrayed in such glorious form. It has fanned the flame of Divine charity in human hearts in all the Christian ages.

The Christian Moral Development.

In its regenerating work Christianity leads each individual through a progressive moral development up to what is called the "measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ." It begins with man as a fallen sinner, the natural man, the man who neither fears nor loves God, and who nevertheless may in his own way listen to the voice of conscience. It brings him first under the awakening of the Divine Spirit, into the fear of God, the second step in moral development. Here conscience is greatly strengthened by the aid of religious motive, although that motive is as yet but the lower form of religion. The first convictions of sin imply this awakening and strengthening of conscience, and as the spirit of conviction does its perfect work, searching the entire heart and life of the man, revealing to him at every step more fully his deficiency before God, the moral nature is called into the most active exercise until the man stands fully revealed to himself in the mirror of a clear and enlightened conscience. His conversion, his contrition, his confessions, all develop a greater moral strength and a clearer moral light. Every step in the

Christian experience implies not only religious but also moral development. When the man in whom this spirit of bondage and fear has done its perfect work next receives the gift of the Holy Ghost, by which he is made a new creature in Christ Jesus, a new, higher and stronger religious motive reinforces conscience. The man now loves God. And with this greater power of conscience comes a still larger enlightenment so that the child of God now walks in the light. This clearer, broader vision of all right in the light of love combined with the perfect peace and holy confidence of a purified conscience give our moral nature its true Christian manhood.

The Christian Spheres of Ethical Activity.

The spheres of moral relation and activity recognised in all systems of natural ethics are as follows: duties to myself, to my family, to my neighbour, to my country, and duties which countries owe each other.

These five are all recognised by Christianity; but it places beside the state the correlate spiritual field of the Church, and perfects the relations of nations in the broader view of humanity beside which it again places the Church universal, and finally centres all duties in God to whom all beings to whom we owe duty belong.

1. While the Christian life is essentially one of denial of self, yet our Lord's great commandments recognise duty to ourselves. "Thou shalt

love thy neighbour as thyself does not exclude or improperly sacrifice self. Among such duties to self recognised in the New Testament are those relating to the health and perfection of the body. As the temple of the Holy Ghost it is to be kept in temperance, chastity, and vigorous exercise and proper means used for the preservation of its health. The mind also is to be cultivated by the acquisition of all useful knowledge; and above all the moral and spiritual nature is to be cultured by communion with God, the study of His Word and growth in grace, and in knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.

2. The foundations of the family are laid in the natural relations of the sexes, and in the relation of parents to their children. These constitute the family at once a natural and a Divine institution, established by the Author of our being. This institution lays the foundation of all human development and is the supremely important element in human life. If it fails all true moral perfection of life becomes impossible, and religion falls with morality. Sin against family life is thus the most heinous of all sins.

The moral foundations of family life are laid—

(*a*) In the obligation of every man and woman to whom God has given the ability, to enter into this relation. The exceptions recognised are the call of some higher duty to humanity.

(*b*) In the right of every man to choose the mother of his children and the companion of his life.

(*c*) In the equally sacred right of every woman to choose the father of her children and the life companion of her home. Upon the exercise of these rights and the resulting covenant for life made between a man and a woman in the early maturity of their life the whole superstructure of their family life is to be built, and Christianity recognises such an act as religious, and made sacredly inviolable by Divine sanction. "What God hath joined together, let not man put asunder."

(*d*) With the birth of a child appears a new personality, and a new right, the right of the children to the full care and affection of both father and mother.

These rights imply the sacred unity and perpetuity of the family relation. They mutually limit and qualify each other, and can be united and harmonised and perfectly fulfilled only in an institution which excludes adultery, polygamy, and divorce, and is a sacredly inviolable lifelong relation, dissolved only by death, unless broken by the most heinous sin. Christianity stands unique in the high standard which it presents on this point, as well as in its solemn religious enforcement.

The large space given to the duties of the family in the Epistles shows the Christian estimate of the importance of the relation. These duties include—

(*a*) Mutual affection, patience and forbearance between husband and wife, parents and children, and brothers and sisters.

(*b*) Wise government, and cheerful obedience maintaining proper order in the family.

(*c*) Mutual provision, help and support.

(*d*) The proper education of the children, and their settlement in life.

The results of the truly Christian home are—

(*a*) The highest efficiency of the home as the training school of humanity and the foundation of both Church and State.

(*b*) The elevation of the position and the entire life and nature of woman, developing the highest virtues of the wife and mother.

(*c*) The growth in the home of all the most beautiful social virtues and affections.

(*d*) The perfection of the æsthetic as well as the social, ethical, and religious life.

(*e*) The maintenance of social purity.

(*f*) The strength, stability and progress of human society.

3. As human society existed in the New Testament times, family life included much more than the relations which we have just considered. Almost the entire industrial life of humanity was included in the family. In the social order of our time, tending more and more to the perfect equality of humanity, a principle to which Christianity has most powerfully contributed, these relations of master and servant, or as to-day employer and employed, have largely passed over into the sphere of general social relations. The moral qualities demanded by these relations are

strongly enforced by Christianity. The master must remember that he too is a servant of Christ, and the servant that his work is judged by God as well as man; and both that they are brethren in Christ Jesus. The virtues of truth, honour, justice, kindness, equity, fidelity, honesty, industry, help for the needy, and respect for age and authority, are not only enforced as moral obligations, but have all the sanctions of religion.

4. The State. The outcome of our modern Christianity is the independence of both Church and State each in its own sphere. This seems to be the legitimate outcome of the teachings of the New Testament. At the date of the origin of Christianity the civil power was supreme and claimed absolute jurisdiction in religion as in all other matters. The teaching of the Apostles was active obedience in all matters of law, order, and justice, passive obedience in suffering wrong for conscience' sake. But this passive obedience was in itself a protest against the encroachment of the State into the domain of conscience, faith and worship. But even in this relation Christianity was the ally of the State in the maintenance of all order, justice, industry, intelligence and civil virtue. But Christianity wrought from within, perfecting the individual. The State wrought from without, organising society under law. The organisation of the State becomes more perfect as its individual elements are perfected, *i.e.* as men one by one are made better. In its work of saving men, that is rescuing them from sin, and

in the exercise of individual conscience in faith and worship Christianity claims liberty and thereby vindicates the dignity of man and asserts his inalienable rights. It may even oppose the State if the State attempts to force conscience by making laws which sanction or encourage moral wrong. Otherwise the State must claim liberty as well as the Church. The delimitation of their several spheres at times raises questions of the greatest delicacy in our complicated modern society. Wherever there is doubt as to the jurisdiction which should be supreme, the principle of the New Testament seems to indicate that the Church should make way for the civil power, leaving the final manifestation of right to God.

5. The Church. The relation of the individual Christian to the Church opens up a distinct and in most respects a new field of duty. The Church is a Divine institution organised, first, for the perfecting of believers; second, for the salvation of the world. Under this organisation each man has responsibility, first, for the use of all means and diligence for the perfection of his own Christian character; second, for all possible helpfulness in the building up of his fellow-Christians; third, for all possible effort both individual and collective for the world's salvation. The duties which arise under these categories are not only unique but often opposed to the ethical maxims of the world. The man of the world, while acknowledging the high ethical character of the spirit of co-operation and helpfulness in the outer

things of life, will often resist as impertinent any intermeddling with his personal inner life. And this sentiment is not without its foundation in right reason. The principle of individual responsibility demands that there shall not be undue interference with individual judgment and conscience. In fact moral and religious changes brought about by mere personal influence or pertinacity are no longer ethical but merely social in their motive. The only conversion of value is that which takes place by the power of the truth and the Divine Spirit in the conscience. The perfect work of the Church is that which conceals self and presents truth. In no relation of duty are the supreme moral qualities more necessary than in this field. Love, zeal, courage, combined with humility, self-effacement, and utter disinterestedness, these are the qualities which must govern in the work, and which were conspicuous in the Master Himself.

From the Church the field of duty leads easily out to the whole brotherhood of humanity and to its regenerated future. The Christian grasps the world as a unity, the family of one Father God, the common brotherhood of man. He sets before him an ideal of the ultimate possibilities of that unity such as can be found in no other system. This is the inspiration and the guide of all his effort, the goal of his hopes and work. The kingdoms of this world shall become the kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ.

International relations. The spirit of Christi-

anity may be fully applied here as in the individual sphere. This is evident.

1. Supreme justice must rule between nations.

2. The golden rule may be applied in international matters.

3. The beneficent spirit of Christianity is not without its application.

In closing this subject we may add a single note on the ethics of the Old Testament. The ethical truth of the Old Dispensation, of course, passes over into the New. Christ came not "to destroy the law or the prophets, but to fulfil." But this very fulfilment, enlarging and giving new and higher significance as well as an entirely new spirit, most frequently made even the old form of precept insufficient. The new wine must be put into new bottles. The spirit and truth of even the least of the old commandments is not to be broken. But duty is no longer confined to their letter; "Except your righteousness exceed the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no wise enter into the kingdom of heaven." In fact the Scribes and Pharisees had by their literalism and their self-righteous spirit, "by the letter and circumcision," become "transgressors of the law" in its true inward spiritual meaning. Our Lord does not give us a new form for each of the ten commandments, but takes as illustrations the third, sixth, and seventh, so resetting them as He in another place does the great commandments, that the narrowness of the old letter is completely broken, and the fulness

and freedom of the new spirit is given free course. The angry temper is murder, the lustful look adultery, the very use of an oath of any kind a weakening of moral truth in its deepest spirit of honest simple transparency and love of the truth, and of the reverential spirit which always feels the presence of God. The old letter completely failed through the devices of the sinful flesh to avoid its narrow literal demand. But the penetrating truth of the new word cannot be so avoided. The old mount was a mount that burned with fire, the new mount is a mount of beatitudes, and its living spirit is the spirit of love which fulfils all law.

CHAPTER V

CHRISTIAN PERFECTION

To the combined religious and ethical life thus presented by Christianity under these three fundamental aspects of righteousness, sonship, and holiness, and developed in the ethical principles just described, there is ascribed in the New Testament a perfection. This is intimated by our Lord Himself in His two great fundamental discourses. Both Matthew and Luke follow the Sermon on the Mount, in which the deepest ethical principles of Christianity are expounded with our Lord's injunction, "Ye therefore shall be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect," and, "Every one when he is perfected shall be as his Master." St John, in his account of our Lord's intercessory prayer, presents the perfection of His followers as the very burden of Christ's supplication—"I in them, and thou in Me, that they may be perfected into one; that the world may know that Thou didst send Me, and lovedst them even as Thou lovedst Me."

This teaching of the Master is followed up by all the leading Apostolic writers of the New Testament, Peter, Paul, James, and John, and the

writer to the Hebrews, all setting forth perfection as the goal of the Christian life in such passages as 1 Peter v. 10, Rom. xii. 2, Eph. iv. 13, Heb. xiii. 21, James i. 4, 1 John iv. 17, and many others. These passages prove clearly that a moral and religious perfection of life and character was an idea familiar both to Christ and His Apostles, and entered fully into their ethical conception of the spiritual life. This does not imply the metaphysical subtleties or narrow definitions of later theologies. But it does imply that a certain full measure of Christian life and character was set forth as "the perfect man," "the measure of the fulness of Christ."

1. As to the nature of this perfection, it is a common term applied to the various aspects both of the religious life as we have already studied it under the blessings of salvation, and also of the outward life which flows from that inner life. Under each aspect of salvation, as righteousness, sonship, and sanctification, the third element, *i.e.* the new heart and life, alone is susceptible of those degrees of development which are implied in a doctrine of perfection. Neither God's act of grace nor the new relation in which it instates us can be less than perfect. When God justifies, it is a perfect forgiveness of all our sins, but the righteous character of finite and imperfect humanity, and still more the righteous life, may still need to be established and perfected. So when we are adopted into the family of God, both God's act of love and our new relation are

perfect; but the regenerate nature and the new life of love may still need perfection. So again, when we are called as the holy people, both God's call and our relation and obligation are all-comprehensive and in themselves perfect. They include all that we can give to the Divine service. But the practical working out of these obligations in all holiness of life may be far from perfect. The doctrine of perfection applies, therefore, to religion as affecting, first, the renewed character, second, the new moral life. In each of these we have—

1. Righteousness or purity (of heart and life). For this the Gospel—

(*a*) Makes provision. Christ "gave Himself for us that He might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto Himself a people for His own possession, zealous of good works." So again, "Christ also loved the Church, and gave Himself up for it; that He might sanctify it, having cleansed it by the washing of water with the word, that He might present the Church to Himself a glorious Church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that it should be holy and without blemish."

(*b*) Gives command. We are called to "cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of the Lord." And every one having in him the hope of the Gospel "purifieth himself even as he is pure." We are to "mortify our members which are upon the earth," and to "put on as the elect of God, holy

and beloved, a heart of compassion, kindness, humility, meekness, long-suffering," etc.

(*c*) Gives examples directly or indirectly, as is done by Paul and John.

Note that this purity is set forth as in the conscience, the affections, and the will, and is connected with the full assurance of faith in Heb. x. 22, and with the baptism of the Holy Ghost, Rom. viii. 2.

2. Perfect love. This is the perfected spirit of sonship. Its most complete exhibition is found in 1 Cor. xiii. 1—xiv. 1, and 1 John iii. 1—v. 5, where it is especially united with perfect righteousness or freedom from sin. Other passages setting it forth are Phil. i. 9-11, Col. iii. 12-17. In its practical aspect it is illustrated in Acts iv. 31-35. As a rich inward experience, Eph. iii. 14-19. In both associated with the work of the Holy Spirit see also Rom. v. 5, viii. 14; Gal. iv. 6; Acts vii. 55; John iii. 5. In 1 Thess. iii. 12-13 it is associated with perfect holiness.

3. The perfection of holiness. This includes the full consecration or setting apart to the service of God of all our powers, both in the inner intent and motive of the heart (devotion), and in the outward activity and service of the life. This is specifically the subject of Paul's prayer for the Thessalonians, 1 Thess. v. 23-24.

It is frequently confused in modern thought with the first aspect of Christian perfection, viz. purity, but in the New Testament, following the

ritual of the Old, they are indeed associated, but yet clearly distinguished. That which was set apart for God must be first purified and then anointed with the consecrating oil. Both are embraced in Titus ii. 11-14. The perfect holiness embraces (1) the full-orbed ideal of the duties and obligations of God's service, and of our calling and election to the same. (2) The holy anointing of the Divine Spirit. (3) The consecrated will including all the active powers of our nature. (4) The perfect service.

The ideal of the holy people is to be found in Christ Himself. He is the Elect Servant and the Head of the Church. Hence "unity with Christ," the "mind of Christ," and "growing up into Christ" are the terms in which this ideal is set before us, and its perfection is expressed by St John in these words: "As He is so are we in this world."

It is scarcely necessary to repeat what we have already traversed as to the calling, the anointing, the privileges and the duties of the elect or holy people. Suffice it to say that as in full assurance justification is carried up to its perfection, and as in perfect love sonship or adoption is carried up into perfection, so in entire sanctification the calling and election are made sure and carried up to their perfection. Probably no other aspect of the perfected Christianity is carried more fully into detail in the New Testament than this. It occupies a large part of the hortatory portion of every epistle; and naturally so as the epistles

were addressed to the collective body of the saints. As examples we may turn to Heb. iii. 1-14. At the end of Paul's wonderful discussion of the New Testament doctrine of the elect people read Rom. xii. 1, etc. After his beautiful picture of the members of Christ's body in 1 Cor. xii., read ch. xiii., or in 2 Cor. ch. vi. 14, vii. 1. Or after the expanded presentation of the glories of the elect, Eph. i. and ii., read the wonderful prayer in ch. iii. and the exhortations of chs. iv.-vi.

Summing up this New Testament teaching as to Christian perfection we note—

1. That it is not set before us as an absolute perfection either negative (*i.e.* absolute sinlessness), or positive (*i.e.* an immutable or fixed limit of spiritual attainment).

2. That it is the maturity, the full normal development of spiritual grace in humanity.

3. That hence it is the highest moral exercise of the holy will as founded in pure conscience, holy affections, and the full scriptural ideal of our calling.

4. That it is a practical life of all righteousness, all graces, and all service according to this holy will.

5. That it grows out of the primary experience of the Christian religion the gift of the Holy Ghost, and may be regarded as a growth to the plenitude of that experience, but that it may proceed from a repetition of that experience in larger measure whereby—

(*a*) The Atonement is applied to the conscience in its full power, 1 John i. 7.

(*b*) The perfect love of God is shed abroad in the heart by the Holy Ghost, 1 John iv. 17-18.

(*c*) The perfect sanctifying truth illuminates the understanding, John xvii. 17, and the perfect anointing guides into all truth, John xvi. 13; 1 John ii. 27.

(*d*) Thus the whole Christian man rises to the Divine ideal set before us by the life of the Master, and set forth in His own words in the Sermon on the Mount, Matt. v., vi., vii.

The Attainment and Life of Christian Perfection.

First of all, there is a more advanced, a full experience, Rom. xii. 2, where the word "prove," δοκιμαζειν, points to the testing of a personal experience, and the will of God which is thus proved is the will of God concerning us in Christ Jesus, 1 Thess. v. 18, which Paul himself had experienced, Acts xxii. 14, and the fulness of which he asks for the Church, Col. i. 9, and which he now exhorts the Roman Church to prove as "good, excellent, and *perfect*."

This experience, however, is not generically different from the primary Christian experience. If that is the purification of conscience, so that henceforth it governs the life in righteousness, this is the perfect cleansing and the pure intention of right. It is a cleansing from all unrighteousness, the testimony of conscience that "in holiness and sincerity of God we behave ourselves in the world, and it is being "sincere and void of

offence unto the day of Christ, being filled with the fruits of righteousness, which are through Jesus Christ, unto the glory and praise of God. If that is the love of God shed abroad in the heart, this is "perfect love." If that is holiness, consecration to the service of God, this is "perfect" holiness. If that is the gift of the Holy Ghost, this is being "filled with the Spirit."

But how is this higher, fuller, perfect experience to be reached? What is the way of its attainment? We note that St Paul in his exhortations to the churches, pressing them on to this perfection of Christianity, sets before them both the law of Christian life and also the promises of the Gospel. In writing to the Ephesians he sets forth the promise, ch. iii. 14-21, and then in chs. iv., v., vi. he expands the full line of Christian duty. In writing to the Galatians, promise, precept, and warning are mingled throughout. So in Corinthians, Romans, Colossians, Philippians, and Thessalonians. Note that the promises often take the forms of prayers.

This Apostolic method shows us clearly that for the attainment of Christian perfection there must be—

1. A full knowledge of God's will. Hence they are called to "prove what is the good and acceptable and perfect will of God," and are sanctified in or by "the truth."

2. A deep searching of heart bringing to light all the elements of moral defect both in heart and life. "If we say we have no sin we deceive our-

selves, and the truth is not in us. But if we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."

3. The enlarged consecration which comes from more perfect knowledge of ourselves and of our duty. With the higher promises and responsibilities of the Gospel before us, we are commanded to "cleanse ourselves from all defilement of flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God."

4. The larger faith which apprehends the fulness of the Gospel promise. Here, as at the beginning, we are "saved by grace through faith." But the promise is now such an one as inspired Paul's prayer for the Thessalonians, "The God of Peace Himself sanctify you wholly, and may your spirit and soul and body be preserved entire without blame at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. Faithful is he that calleth you, who will also do it."

5. The fulness of the power of the Holy Spirit. So again Paul prays for the Roman Church, that "The God of Hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope in the power of the Holy Ghost." Of such fulness of power we have many examples in the Acts of the Apostles, where it is said again and yet again, that "they were all filled with the Holy Ghost," and as a result new strength for labour, and new power in ministry, and new grace for dying, testimony are manifestly given.

Corresponding to these scriptural landmarks has been the teaching and experience of the most eminent saints in the history of the Church. To this we have the witness of Augustine in his "Confessions," of Kempis in "The Imitation of Christ," of Taylor, Law, Fletcher, and Wesley in their writings on Christian Perfection, and of Barclay in his "Apology," and of the Westminster Assembly of Puritan Divines in their "Confession of Faith." In the fifth century, in the middle ages of the Western Church, in the great Puritan Movement and in both High Anglicanism and Methodism, the experience of the Church has been one on this point; and as in the Apostolic age, so in each of these ages, and may we not say in all the Christian ages, men have been consciously purified in the spirit of their minds by the manifestation of the truth through the power of the Spirit.

Precise definitions as to the extent of the effects of this work of grace and as to the best designation by which to describe it have led to differences of opinion, and even to violent controversy. But in all ages, and among all who possess the truth of the Divine life, the highest and best living faith of the Church has grasped something of this glorious "measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ." Its clearer apprehension, and its more universal enjoyment will presage the full coming in of our Lord's Kingdom and prove the moral power for the conquest of the world.

Excursus on the Life and Practice of Christian Perfection.

The right conscience and the perfect love become the holy motive of a consecrated will. This will is not compelled. It is still within the moral limits of probation, *i.e.* it must work, it must strive, it must exercise itself to all godliness, otherwise it may still fail and fall away. If this were not so, Christian perfection would end probation, and the life of perfect holiness would move forward automatically. The new experience places the moral nature in its right relation to all the motive principles of our nature, but leaves us still subject to probation, hence requiring to watch and pray and able to maintain the perfect ascendency of conscience and love over all lower desires only by the exercise of will. The desires indeed no longer fight as before, but the firm hand of consecrated will must be kept on them, otherwise they may again become inordinate. There are, moreover, physical and intellectual limitations, some of them arising directly from our sins, from which deliverance comes not in this life. Brain and muscle, memory and power of prolonged consecutive thought may all be less than they might have been but for our sins and those of our ancestors. The perfect regeneration comes only with the resurrection morning. To understand the bearing of these facts upon the practical life of even the most perfect type of the Christian here we must pay some attention

to the psychological analysis of our active and motive nature.

There are three distinct elements which may act as motives on the basis of which will may be exercised.

1. The appetites, desires, and affections which connect us with the world around us whether material or spiritual. These are always moved from without us, and by the agency of the senses or memory of that which comes through the senses.

2. The higher religious affections which unite us to God above us, and arise through faith by the power of the Holy Spirit.

3. Conscience, which sits within as the arbiter of all motives judging of them as right or wrong, and which becomes itself a motive power by the force of its imperative "I ought" or "I ought not." We have already seen that regenerating power is applied (1) to the conscience. By the Divine act of forgiveness as applied by the Holy Spirit, the conscience is first purified, then quickened and strengthened. Its power to give the right direction to life is restored. (2) To the religious affections. They are created anew within us. Love is followed by the complete fruits of the Spirit.

But we are now called to consider a fourth element of our nature, the will. This is the man acting. It is the deepest self. It is the centre in which all else meet. It is the putting forth of our power which is our measure of being. Now,

regenerating grace in the third place reaches our will. It puts the will under the direction of conscience on the basis of the religious motive, *i.e.* love to God and to man as God's child. The will is consecrated. The whole man feels himself to be the servant of the living God.

In this way the centre of personality, the man putting forth his power of being, is transferred from the lower to the higher being, from the sensuous to the spiritual nature. The flesh no longer rules, but the spirit.

But the flesh still strives, rebels, and is not subject to the law of God. But its power is broken, and it is now controlled by the new will directed by conscience and animated by the love of God. And as the work of grace is perfected the perfect control becomes easy, the will grows strong in spirit. The passions still exist, and still must be governed, but now that the centre of life, the interest and energy of our being, is transferred from them, they lose the abnormal strength which they once possessed, and fall back to the position for which God made them, the servants of the Spirit. But they must ever be governed as servants, otherwise they may again seek to be masters. Even in this service, like the body itself with which many of them are intimately connected, they are not perfect servants. They may carry to the end the weakness which the service of sin has impressed upon them. In the resurrection morning the creature itself, *i.e.* the material nature, shall be delivered from the

bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God. On the other hand, through the will and through what may be called the co-ordination of the affections, these lower affections are themselves refined, purified, and made meet for the higher service upon which they now enter. The social affections especially are purified and elevated by the quickening power of religion, and in the perfected Christian character their renewed action becomes of the highest importance. Many of the fruits of the Spirit are the renewed social affections, and one of them, temperance, pervades the whole field of the appetites themselves. The same principles apply to the influence of religion in the intellectual nature. The memory, the imagination, and the power of reasoning may carry to the grave the results of the weakening which has resulted from sin, and may not again be perfect servants of the Spirit until the perfect regeneration of the resurrection morning. But even these are wonderfully quickened and strengthened in all their higher and better action by the new power of spiritual life. This quickening extends to logical continuity of thought, to intuitive penetration, and to æsthetic sense as well.

Even the body itself, freed from vicious passions and appetites, and stimulated by the serene peace and joy of the new life, is strengthened by the change, although its full promise lies beyond. It thus appears that Christian perfection is the redemption of the entire manhood, its restoration

at least in a measure to the best that it is now possible for us to reach in this human and brief probation. It is a promise indeed of the life that now is, all that is best and noblest in it; but it is a still more abundant promise for a life to come. Even in this life—

1. It makes man master of himself by bringing will and conscience into rule of the whole inner as well as outer life. Until that takes place man is a slave; now in Christ he becomes truly free. The automatic rule of the passions is bondage. The calm, self-centred rule of conscience deciding and doing the right is alone worthy of man.

2. It lifts this freed man to the plane of the Divine. God is love, and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him.

3. From this central force it works out a higher perfection for every subordinate element of our nature. Intellect is quickened, taste is refined, judgment is made clear, imagination is purified, memory is strengthened, affections are given a nobler action, appetites are moderated to their true ends, and even the body itself attains a higher perfection and a more perfect beauty. What shall it be when we shall be like Him, beholding Him as He is?

DIVISION VII
THE OFFICE AND AGENCIES OF THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH

CHAPTER I

THE CHURCH

THE culmination of the blessings of salvation is as we have seen the union of the saved believer with the chosen people of God. This is first of all an inward and spiritual union, a union known to God and recorded in Heaven, a unity of one faith, one Lord, and one God, and Father over all. The object of this unity as we have seen is the fulfilment of the eternal purpose of God for the world's salvation by Christ Jesus.

But this very purpose requires an external and organised unity as well as the unity of the Spirit. Hence our Lord in teaching the things of the kingdom not only sets forth its great spiritual principles in the form of parables, but takes it for granted that His disciples will assemble, as did the people of God under the old dispensation; and He lays the foundation of their organic work by choosing apostles and evangelists whom He sends forth to preach His Gospel. He also organises sacramental rites to be perpetuated in

the new church as had been circumcision and the passover in the old; and finally commissions His apostles not to rule the church thus organised, but to preach the Gospel, and to admit all believers into the Church by baptism, and to teach them fully the truth which He had given them; for this purpose giving them the promise of the Holy Spirit. This church thus outlined in its most essential elements by our Lord Himself, was fully developed under the guidance of the Holy Spirit from the day of Pentecost onward.

The Church was in this way naturally and historically established, before the world as the visible embodiment of the new Christian faith, first at Jerusalem, then throughout Palestine, in the Syrian city of Antioch reaching the Gentile world and receiving the name Christian.

Historically then the Church was founded—

1. In the example of the ancient assemblies of God's people in temple and synagogue.

2. In the establishment of the ordinances of baptism and the Lord's Supper.

3. In the appointment of the twelve apostles.

These were the outward and preparatory steps.

4. The inward principles of the Church were embodied in our Lord's teaching as to the nature and work of His Kingdom.

5. The practical act of foundation took place on the day of Pentecost. The assembly, the baptism of the Spirit, the preaching of the Gospel, the conversion of three thousand, and their admission as disciples by baptism, these were the

first practical measures of a living church, embracing the most essential elements of its work and function in the world; and from that day forward the visible church of Christ was known amongst men.

The Church as thus practically commenced was from the beginning—

1. An assembly of the disciples of Christ; (*a*) for united prayer, according to the emergencies of their lives. When Peter and John were let go after their first arraignment before the Sanhedrim, they betook themselves to this assembly, "and when they had prayed the place was shaken wherein they were gathered together; and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and they spake the Word of God with boldness; (*b*) for mutual edification and the communion of the Lord's Supper, "They continued steadfast in the Apostles' teaching and fellowship, in the breaking of bread and the prayers."

2. An organisation for mutual assistance distributing to the necessities of the poor, and for the preaching of the Gospel in the world. At the beginning the Apostles themselves seem to have directed this work in both its branches, and thus to have formed not only the authority by which it was directed, but more conspicuously the centre of activity around which it gathered. The Apostles led in the preaching of the Gospel and the teaching of the Church, and the gifts of the Church were laid at their feet.

But in a very short time even the direction of this work became too burdensome for them, and as a result confusion arose. The force of circumstances thus gave rise to the first step in the extension of Church organisation beyond the original arrangements of Christ Himself. The seven deacons were appointed for the daily ministration, while the Apostles continued "steadfastly in prayer and in the ministry of the Word." These were appointed for their Christian character, they were men of good report, full of the Spirit and of wisdom. They were selected by the multitude of the disciples, and solemnly appointed by the Apostles with the laying on of hands.

Presently with the rapid increase of the disciples we find these deacons also taking part in the ministry of the Word. Stephen full of grace and power became a most conspicuous figure in the propagation of the new doctrine; and after his martyrdom Philip appears prominent in evangelistic labours, establishing the Church in Samaria. In fact the record implies that large numbers of the original church at Jerusalem now scattered abroad by persecution were engaged in evangelistic work. At the same time it is evident that the oversight of this work remained in the Apostles' hands who for this purpose continued at Jerusalem. Presently we find the *Church* at Jerusalem exercising this supervision, and sending forth Barnabas who with Saul seems to complete the establishment of the new Christian Church at Antioch as Peter and John had done with that of Samaria.

In the meantime prophets and teachers had taken their place as workers in the Church. In what way they were introduced we know not, nor how their office and work was recognised. Later on Paul informs us that the qualifications by which they discharged their duties were the special gift of the Holy Spirit. In a similar way we first meet with elders, far out in the churches of Galatia, who it would seem were appointed by the voice of the Church and the laying on of the hands of Paul now the apostle to the Gentiles. But before this it would seem there were elders in the church at Jerusalem appointed we know not when or how. Finally we find these elders spoken of as overseers or bishops and as pastors or shepherds of the flock. These fragmentary notes represent our recorded information as to the beginnings of organisation in the Apostolic Church. They serve at least to show very clearly that it was no cast-iron system prescribed by authority and imposed by command, but a natural growth, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, taking its outward shape from the examples at hand or the measures indicated by the growing wants and work of the Church as understood by sanctified common sense, and that in its institution the judgment and voice of the people and the authoritative oversight of the Apostles were harmoniously united.

In the church thus established as a living historic institution, some other things are worthy to be noted.

1. The bond of unity between its various branches.

2. Its mode of settlement of questions of the faith.

3. Its exercise of discipline.

4. Its perpetuation of the ministry.

5. Its method of extending its operations into new fields.

The Church of the living God as in general is certainly referred to by Paul as "the house of God" and "the pillar and ground of the truth"; but it may be questioned whether this or any other passage in the New Testament implies an outward organic unity. The spiritual unity of the Church as the body of Christ is on the other hand clearly and fully set forth in such passages as the fourth of Ephesians. "It is one body and one spirit even as also ye were called in one hope of your calling. It is to be preserved by meekness, long-suffering and love; and its essential elements are one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is over all, and through all and in all."

But while the spiritual unity in faith and love is thus emphasized, there are not wanting indications of an outward unity manifest in two ways; first in apostolic oversight and authority; and again in respect for the mother church at Jerusalem. It does not appear, however, that in the Apostolic age there was any attempt to exercise such authority, in any other way than by purely spiritual influences; and there is no example in

the Apostolic age of either the Apostles or the mother churches attempting to exercise discipline other than that of earnest presentation of the truth.

The two examples which we have of this are the reference of the church at Antioch to the Mother Church, including the Apostles and elders at Jerusalem, and St Paul's dealing with the churches in Galatia, the fruits of his first missionary journey. The question in both these cases was the same, not of spiritual decline or immorality of life, but of the true doctrine of Christianity; and the authority employed is the setting forth of the truth. There is not even an implicit threat of refusal to acknowledge them as churches of Christ; on the contrary, Paul does so acknowledge them in express terms. Christian truth must be maintained by the conviction of faith, by the truth and the Spirit, and not by anathemas. Paul's only anathema is for those who love not the Lord as shown in a wicked life.

We have in the New Testament more than one instance of the exercise of the discipline of exclusion from individual churches, but in each case for unholy life. Such were Hymenæus and Philetus who made shipwreck of faith and a good conscience, and the incestuous man at Corinth. The responsibility of this discipline is clearly placed upon those to whom is committed the care of the churches, and in each of these cases it is exercised by Paul himself. The perpetuation of the ministry was another

essential element of the work of the Apostolic Church. Writing to Timothy, Paul says, "The things which thou hast heard from me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also." So to Titus he gives direction to appoint elders in every city as a part of the necessary order of the Church. This had already been a matter of verbal instruction, and was, as we see from Acts xiv. 23, Paul's own custom. An elder was to be blameless in life, free from violent passion and covetousness, filled with the Christian spirit of love, a just man as becometh all rulers and "sound" in doctrine, with ability both to teach and to maintain the truth. The emphasis is here again laid on thoroughly spiritual elements, and not upon any outward form.

We have in the New Testament one marked example of the Church's entrance upon a new field of work under our Lord's great commission. The record is in the thirteenth chapter of the Acts. It was out of a time of special spiritual quickening in the Church that this new work took its beginning. The prophets and teachers, they were probably both, were earnestly engaged in the ministry of teaching in the church at Antioch, and at the same time devoting themselves to fasting and prayer, when a conviction from the Spirit of God fastened on their minds. "Separate me, Barnabas and Saul, for the work whereunto I have called them." This would appear to indicate that they themselves had

already received a call to the missionary work. This call was now confirmed by a Divine conviction felt by the Church. Immediately that conviction is put into action, and the whole Church solemnly sets them apart and sends them forth to this new work. This example is especially valuable as showing how free, how natural, how providential, and yet how spiritual and how divinely directed were these movements of the Apostolic Church.

From those aspects of the Church as an organised body, working and visible in the world, with its many branches scattered everywhere, we turn to the broader view of the Church as a living ideal unity in Christ, on earth yet heavenly and spiritual in its attributes. From the early ages there have been assigned to the Church viewed thus in its ideal unity the seven notes or attributes. It is One, Apostolic, Catholic, Invisible, Holy, Indefectible, and Glorious. These attributes are founded in the truth as apprehended by religious faith; they are expressed in Scripture, not collectively in a single statement, but at various times and places, but they belong in their truth and perfection not to any individual church, but to the ideal Church as seen by God, and as it will be revealed in millennial glory.

The Church of Christ, as we have already seen, is ONE, not as an immense worldly, political or ecclesiastical organism, but in spirit, in faith, in service of the common Lord, and in worship of the common Father, but still more especially in

the love and peace of common work together for God. That any living branch of the Church is still sadly short of this ideal is only too evident.

That it has scarcely been realised in practice since the early Apostolic age is also evident. And yet in the deeper spirit, it is true in every age, and never more so than to-day, blind and imperfect as we are, every true believer feels something of this unity of the Spirit, and longs for its more perfect expression in some form in the outer life of the whole Church of God. It may perhaps only be perfectly realised in our own hearts when we recognise that there are many members in one body, and diversities of operation of the same Spirit.

The Church of Christ is Apostolic. It is "built upon the foundation of the Apostles and prophets," *i.e.* of their divinely inspired teaching, "Jesus Christ Himself being the chief corner-stone." But this very passage which so clearly and directly asserts this attribute of Apostolicity, itself recognises more than one building so founded. Even in Paul's day there were the churches of the Gentiles founded on his teaching of the Gospel of the uncircumcision, and the churches of the circumcision founded on the preaching of Peter. Paul's supreme effort was to prevent these forms from dividing Christ and His cause. But he gave the right hand of fellowship to Peter to go to the Hebrews, and accepted the same that he and Barnabas should go to the Gentiles, and rejoiced if in either way

Christ was preached. The Apostolic foundation was the Apostolic doctrine, life, and spirit, fully expressed by no one of the twelve, but transmitted to the Church as a heritage from them all, each according to his measure of the gift of God. Its perfection will be the light of the interpreting spirit which will come upon the Church in the millennial morning.

The Church of Christ is CATHOLIC. It is the common spiritual fellowship of the whole body, embracing all who love the Lord Jesus in sincerity. It reconciles all differences in Christ, He makes "of the twain one new man, so making peace." It is the Spirit which says, "Grace be with all them that love our Lord Jesus Christ in uncorruptness. It ignores unimportant distinctions; neither is circumcision anything, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature." And it says from the heart, "As many as shall walk by this rule, peace be upon them, and mercy, and upon the Israel of God."

This church is invisible to the eye of flesh and visible only in heaven. So the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews says, "Ye are not come unto a mount that might be touched," an outward and palpable body, something to be recognised by the outward senses. "But ye are come to Mount Zion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to innumerable hosts of angels, to the general assembly and Church of the first-born who are enrolled in heaven." This passage in itself

gives us the clearest ideal of this church as it stands before the eye of God.

This church is HOLY. It is "a holy nation." And yet each individual member still needs the exhortation "to abstain from fleshly lusts which war against the soul"; and, "As he which called you is holy, be ye yourselves holy in all manner of living."

It is INDEFECTIBLE. Christ's promise is that "the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it." Each individual member may fall or be deceived, they may "stumble at the word being disobedient." The false prophets "shall lead many astray," and deceive, "if possible, even the elect"; but the remnant shall endure to the end and be saved for God's purpose.

It is a GLORIOUS church. Such it is in the love of Christ who loved the Church and gave Himself up for it that He might sanctify it, "having cleansed it by the washing of water with the Word, that He might present the Church unto Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that it should be holy and without blemish." The glory of the Church like the glory of God is the glory of holiness.

It will be seen that the church as thus viewed is not material, or outward and formal; it is the church as viewed by God in its inner spirit and life, the church which is now only growing into God's holy temple, but which will yet be revealed in all its Divine perfections. This church is as

yet a vision of faith; but even now its foundations are perfectly laid in Christ, and its walls are slowly rising, and one day each stone will be polished for the palace of the King, and our highest and holiest ideal of her beauty will be far surpassed by the completed work of the Master Builder.

The Visible Church.

The Church existing before God in its catholic or universal form, becomes the visible Church in each particular age and place as "a congregation of believing men, in which the pure Word of God is preached, and the Sacraments are duly administered according to Christ's ordinance in all things that of necessity are requisite to the same."

According to the definition of this article, which would probably be generally accepted by Protestants, the outward and visible Church includes—

1. An assembly, congregation, or visibly united body of believers.

2. The preaching of the Word of God.

3. The administration of the Sacraments according to Christ's ordinance in all things that of necessity are requisite to the same. Wherever these are found there is the Church. The Church is essentially the congregation of believers, and its necessary accompaniments the ministry of the Word and the administration of the Sacraments.

Historically we have already found—

1. That such a church is founded by the preaching of the Gospel through which men become believers, and are called into the fellowship of the Church.

2. That its individual members were admitted by baptism.

3. That the whole Church is built up, as also each of its members, by pastoral care and instruction.

4. That the Lord's Supper and the assembling for Christian fellowship and prayer are the tokens of continuous membership.

5. That the Church, as thus constituted, becomes God's instrument for the world's salvation. From each church as a centre, and by its ministry as a church, the Gospel is to be spread abroad to the regions beyond. For this ministry of salvation the whole Church is responsible; but, as we have seen, for its fulfilment in the varied labours required, God endows and calls individual men, who thus constitute a separate ministry. They are at once, with the whole Church, ministers of Christ for His work, and yet ministers and messengers of the churches set apart at the call of God.

CHAPTER II

THE MINISTRY IN THE CHURCH

THE Apostles, chosen and appointed by Christ Himself and taught by Him for their work, were the beginning both of the Church and the ministry. They, with a few others faithful to the teaching of the Master as His disciples, who believed on Him and at Pentecost were endowed with His Spirit, constituted the living Church. To this whole Church the ministry of the Gospel for the world's salvation was committed as the result of their calling in Christ. This universal ministry, calling, election and responsibility soon became an important element of the religious faith of both Jewish and Gentile churches. It was, as we have seen, a most important aspect of their salvation in Christ Jesus. At the same time the special call given by Christ to the twelve was from the beginning recognised, not only by their converts from Pentecost onward, but also by the few who were associated with them as followers of the Lord and partakers of the first baptism of the Holy Ghost, and who do not seem to have been admitted on profession of their faith by baptism with water.

These twelve for a time fulfilled every office of

the ministry in the Church, though there is no proof of their monopoly of any single function, whether of preaching, teaching, or baptising. As we may judge from the first chapter of Acts, they felt themselves specially charged with the responsibility of being "witnesses" (for Christ) of His resurrection, and for this purpose out "of the men which have companied with us all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and went out among us, beginning from the baptism of John, unto the day that He was received up from us," Joseph and Matthias were selected as qualified to succeed Judas. Of these as apostles we never hear by name again, but Paul and Barnabas are clearly recognised as apostles to the Gentiles, and Paul grounds his claim to apostleship not only on his having seen the Lord Jesus, but also upon his work in the Lord as the seal of his apostleship, and on this he claims the *freedom* in his work of an apostolic founder.

In this unique work as the original witnesses of the life, teaching, and resurrection of Christ, and the founders of the Church in doctrine, the Apostles could have no successors. No second generation could bear their original testimony, and no new foundations could be added to those laid by Christ and His Apostles. But from the beginning, the work of the Apostles embraced more than this. The preaching of the Word, the planting and building of new churches and their pastoral oversight, soon became a work for which twelve men were utterly insufficient, and for which,

as we have already seen, new and subordinate orders of the ministry were appointed, growing up with the growth of the Church, and appointed in ways which at once recognised the authority of the Apostles and the voice of the entire Church.

The special ministry thus grew to include after the Apostles who stood alone in their relation both to Christ and the Church:

1. Prophets associated with them in doctrine.

2. Teachers extending the knowledge of the truth revealed to the Apostles and prophets by the Spirit.

3. Evangelists engaged with the Apostles in planting the Church in the regions beyond.

4. Elders, bishops, or pastors for the care and supervision of the churches.

5. Deacons, assistants to the pastors, especially in the care of the sick and the poor.

With reference to this New Testament ministry thus historically created in the Apostolic age we may note:

1. That it is clearly recognised as a thing necessary to the Church's work, and hence is enjoined to be perpetuated. Paul especially lays this as a duty upon both Timothy and Titus.

2. That it is the gift of Christ to the Church through the Holy Spirit. He bestows the gifts and gives the call.

3. That in its outward appointment the voice, both of the existing ministry, whether apostles, the presbytery, or men specially charged with this

duty, as Timothy and Titus, is clearly recognised, as is also the judgment of the whole Church.

4. That no injunctions are given as to the form or orders of this ministry or its precise mode of institution or appointment, the whole emphasis resting upon its spiritual character and moral qualifications, and upon the responsible duties which it is called upon to perform. If we may judge from the history of its origin, it is a spiritual and not an outward and formal institution, free to adapt itself to the needs of its work as indicated by the Providence of God to the spiritual judgment of the Church in every time and place. This principle has practically enforced itself in spite of theories to the contrary. Names and forms have been rigidly retained, but the things themselves have taken shape from environment, as we believe God intended. At the same time a wise conservative spirit and respect for the example of antiquity is in accord with the spirit of Christianity. The relations of Christianity to Judaism, and the examples of Peter the conservative and Paul the man of new light and life, are full of instruction. Paul did not forget his reverence, and Peter bowed before the clearly manifested will of God.

CHAPTER III

THE MEANS OF GRACE

FROM the Church and the ministry as the working institutions of Christianity in her commission for the world's salvation, we turn naturally to the means to be employed for the accomplishment of her work. These are variously designated as means of grace, ordinances, and public services or ministry of the Church, two being specially distinguished as the Sacraments.

They are five in number.

1. The ministration of the Word, whether by preaching or teaching.
2. Prayer.
3. Baptism.
4. The Lord's Supper.
5. The fellowship of saints.

It is clear from the New Testament that the saving efficacy lies not in the outward forms or observance of these means, but in the truth which they present, and in the power of the Holy Spirit working through them. And yet each of these means is adapted to its end as cause to effect. They each appeal to our moral and religious nature, and are channels fitted by the God who made us to convey His grace.

The order of these means is that given above. By the Word of God the foundations of truth are laid, and the Spirit works conviction unto repentance. The penitent sinner seeks God in prayer, and again by the promises of the Word is led to faith. The believer is baptized, and so enters the fellowship of the Church and takes his place at the table of the Lord. Through the use of these means, grace is built up to its maturity or perfection.

We cannot say that God works apart from all means for the saving of men. Certainly in the order which He has given to His Church, the use of these means is necessary. On the other hand we would make a fundamental mistake if we claimed that any particular form of them was in every case essential to salvation. The New Testament seems only to affirm the necessity of the fundamental means, the Word. Men cannot believe in Him of whom they have not heard. God's truth in some form is necessary to faith, and faith to true prayer, and prayer to salvation. Upon these as foundations, the sacramental means are built, but there is no express statement that even baptism is necessary to salvation. It is indeed said, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved"; but the negative is, "He that believeth not," or as the Revised Version has it, "he that 'disbelieveth,' shall be condemned." The whole doctrine which makes sacramental ordinances the foundation, and therefore in every case essential to salvation, is built upon the

notion that saving grace operates by occult processes, and not by moral, *i.e.* spiritual power; and unless we have mistaken the true meaning of the New Testament is opposed to its teaching.

The Ministry of the Word.

We have already considered the Word of God as the revelation of God to men, based upon the historic facts by which God is revealed, and interpreted by the Spirit of Inspiration, and forming a Divine message to men in the minds and from the lips of those whom God has chosen for that purpose. All portions of this Word prepare the way for, lead up to, centre around or follow from Christ, who is thus pre-eminently the Word of God, and the Truth. As in Paul, so in every believer, Christ must be revealed, or at least some measure of the truth which is in Him. To St John He is not only the "light of men," but "the true light which lighteth every man coming into the world." The reception of the truth as it is in Christ is the final test of all human probation.

This Word manifest in, as well as spoken by, our Lord Himself, was fully revealed in the Apostolic Church by the Holy Spirit; and its ministry as a spoken Word preceded by some years the Written Word of the New Testament. Into that Spoken Word the ancient Scriptures of the Old Covenant largely entered as leading to the Christ who was its central theme. The whole New Testament Scripture is the unfolding

to the Church and the world of the salvation which is in Christ Jesus. But we have not here to consider the Word as the written record of Divine revelation, but rather as the instrument of the Spirit in its work in the hearts of men for their salvation. As such it is called the Sword of the Spirit, the Truth, the Gospel or good news of our salvation, and the Word of promise; and is the instrument of conviction, of faith, of regeneration, of sanctification, of comfort and of edification. As such it is to be preached, studied, taught and witnessed in and by the Church. First of all it is the duty of the Church and the ministry by careful and prayerful study to have this Word "richly in them in all wisdom," a living Word apprehended by faith in their own hearts.

Secondly, for this purpose to be diligent in the study and the teaching of the Word, both for themselves and for each other. Paul's admonitions to the churches and especially to Timothy are very instructive on this point.

Thirdly, to preach this Word to the whole world for the salvation of men. This is the great commission of the Apostles and of the whole Church.

Again to present this Word as the living testimony of saving, living faith. They are to be the witnesses of the truth of the Word in their own experience. In this way alone does it reach its full efficiency for the conviction and salvation of sinners. It is the "living and powerful Word," as it comes from the heart in which it works its

full results by the power of the Spirit. Hence to be filled with the Spirit is the supreme duty of the ministering church.

The office of the Word as a means of grace is well summarised by St Paul in 2 Tim. iii. 16, 17, "Every Scripture inspired of God is also profitable for teaching," the truth entering the understanding; "for reproof," the conviction of the conscience; "for correction," the change of life, conversion; "for instruction which is in righteousness," the practical life of the Christian; "that the man of God may be complete, furnished completely to every good work."

Prayer.

From the very foundations of the Christian Church prayer occupied a most prominent place. Before Pentecost the whole band of disciples "continued steadfastly in prayer" until the descent of the Spirit crowned their supplications. Immediately after, when persecution appeared, they betook themselves to prayer, and again were "all filled with the Holy Spirit." Our first account of the infant church after the baptism of the three thousand is that "they continued steadfastly in the Apostles' doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread and the prayers," implying that from the very first definite seasons of united prayer were observed in the Church. Shortly after, on the appointment of the deacons, we find the Apostles devoting themselves entirely to this

service and the ministry of the Word. But prayer not only constituted in itself a service of the Church, but it also entered as an element into all their religious services. It would appear from the beginning to have accompanied the ministry of the Word and the Sacraments; and it is repeatedly mentioned as used in the setting apart of men for the work of the ministry. At the same time we have frequent examples of its use as a separate service, especially in times when great needs or dangers pressed the Church or its members. Prayer also accompanied the working of such special miracles as the raising to life of Dorcas. Individual and secret prayer was also practised in the Church, at times accompanied by fasting, and is also specially marked by Divine approval and answers. At his conversion Paul waited in prayer for the light which was to lead him to the full possession of the Spirit of Christ. Cornelius through prayer was led into the full light of the gospel salvation. To Peter observing the customary hour of private prayer was given the commission to open the door of the church to the Gentiles. In the Acts of the Apostles we have many other examples of the use of this means of grace in the Apostolic Church. In answer to prayer Peter is released from prison. Paul starts out on both his first and his second missionary journey with the prayer of the Church. With prayer he appointed elders in the new churches. In prison Paul and Silas prayed and were delivered, and with prayer

he takes his farewell of the Church. In harmony with this history is the whole subsequent Apostolic teaching on the subject of prayer. Paul, for instance, gives specific directions as to the appropriate manner of prayer, and requires that it be "with the Spirit and with the understanding also," and makes it include joyous thanksgiving "for all things in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ." He himself is constant in his prayers for the churches, and in turn asks them to pray for him, and exhorts them to "pray without ceasing," and "that supplications, prayers, intercessions, thanksgivings be made for all men, for kings and for all that are in high place"; and "that men pray in every place, lifting up holy hands without wrath and disputing." The directions of St James for prayers for the sick are too well known to need more than reference. This entire practice and teaching of the Apostolic Church but followed the example of the Old Testament Church and, in fact, of good men of all ages, and has its most complete justification in the example and teaching of our Lord Himself. He describes the true spirit of prayer as opposed to the ostentatious worship of the formalist, gives us a wonderfully comprehensive, spiritual, and appropriate form of prayer fitted to all circumstances and occasions in the public and private life of man; a universal prayer which the child may lisp and with which the saint may enter heaven. He gives us lessons of perseverance in prayer, and exceedingly rich promises of answer to prayer.

Finally, in all the great crises of His earthly life we find Him in prayer. When the shadow of the cross began to fall upon Him He spent all night in prayer. Before choosing and sending forth His disciples He went up into a mountain alone to pray, and the prayers of the upper chamber and Gethsemane are well remembered.

The Christian teaching as to the things for which we may pray is also very full, and in completing our view of this means of grace also attests its importance in religion.

The Sacraments.

From the earliest period we can trace the habit of approach to God by symbols. In the second and third chapters of Genesis two distinctive symbolic ordinances are set before us—one, negative, separating the unfallen man from sin, the other, positive, a means of God's gift of life. Each was associated with a tree of the garden.

In the Mosaic dispensation two such ordinances are again found—circumcision, a symbol of the putting away of sin, and the passover, through which their ransomed life was given to the Israelites.

Two such ordinances were instituted by our Lord Himself, Baptism and the Lord's Supper, and to these alone in Protestantism the term Sacrament is applied. The term is ecclesiastical rather than scriptural in its origin, and hence

cannot be defined by any higher than ecclesiastical authority. But the ordinances to which we thus apply it are distinctive ordinances with the following important notes:

1. They are universal, enjoined on all Christians.
2. They were established by Christ Himself.
3. They are symbolical of the two fundamental Christian ideas, the putting away sin and life by faith in Christ.
4. They follow in line from similar ordinances of the Old Testament.

These four distinctive notes cannot be applied to the five additional ordinances called sacraments by the Roman Church, Confirmation, Penance, Extreme Unction, Matrimony, and Orders. Hence these two stand out as the distinctive ordinances of the new dispensation, and are conveniently known as the Christian Sacraments or Mysteries, though both terms are of ecclesiastical rather than of scriptural usage.

Baptism—

This is a universal duty of the Christian probation. It is the outward and public profession not only of the putting away of sin, *i.e.* of repentance and conversion, but also of faith in Christ for the remission of sins, and in the primitive church was usually followed by the gift or seal of the Holy Spirit. From a single passage, John iv. 1, we may infer that it was already in use during our Lord's lifetime, though not by Christ

Himself but by His disciples, as a mode of enrolling or admitting disciples. Our account of the authority of the Master for its permanent institution as the ordinance of admission into the Christian Church, is in the words of the great commission as recorded by Matthew and Mark.

In the study of this ordinance we have three points to consider:

I. *The Nature of Baptism.*

A fundamental question has divided the Church from very early times. Is baptism primarily an ordinance in which God bestows or in which man accepts? Is it first expressive of our desire toward God a symbolic ordinance in which we publicly renounce sin, and consecrate ourselves to the service of God in faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, and which is answered by God's blessing upon our faith? Or is it first expressive of God's relation to us, an abiding provision, a fountain for sin and uncleanness, which God hath set up in His Church, to which all may come and receive the gifts of God's grace? The answer to this question varies from the bare symbolism of Zwingli to the mystic grace *ex opere operato* of the sacramentarians. Doubtless each extreme includes an element of truth, and the most complete view of the truth in this matter may be gained from an induction of the New Testament teaching.

1. Baptism is commanded to the awakened and penitent who have yielded to their convictions. Thus at Pentecost Peter says to the

troubled enquirers, "Repent ye and be baptized every one of you in the name of the Lord Jesus." It therefore expresses a state of mind or a spiritual act needed on our part in our approach to God; or a provision on God's part of His grace and salvation in Christ.

2. It is, on the other hand, presented as the voluntary desire of the penitent; so the Ethiopian eunuch requests baptism which is allowed on the condition of faith. This again may be regarded as a desire to express his penitent faith on the one side, or as a desire to enter into the blessings and provisions of the Gospel covenant of salvation on the other.

3. It is commanded as a duty to the Apostles. It is a part of their commission to preach, to teach, and to baptize. This certainly points to the view that in baptism there is maintained not merely an appointed mode of admission into the Christian Church, but also an institution which exhibits to the sinner and to the whole world God's act of grace in the forgiveness of our sins and the renewal of our natures by the gift of the Holy Ghost.

4. It is set forth as the privilege of the believer. Peter witnessing the results of his preaching to the Gentiles in their faith and the descent of the Holy Spirit, says, "Can any man forbid the water that these should not be baptized which have received the Holy Ghost as well as we?" As a condition of their receiving remission of sins and the gift of the Holy Spirit, the ordinance here was unnecessary, for these they had already

received. But as the public seal of their reception into the fellowship of God's elect people, it was their privilege to receive this sacramental ordinance; and God had attested this by bestowing without it the inward seal of the blessings which it signified.

5. While it is usually followed or accompanied by the gift of the Holy Ghost, it is from this case clear that the two are not to be identified, either as synonymous or as cause and effect. This appears also from the instance of the Samaritan converts under the preaching of Philip, and of the twelve men of Ephesus. Other conditions than those implied in the outward ordinance of baptism were necessary.

6. Other references to baptism represent it as an act by which we die to sin, Rom. vi. 2, etc.; wash away our sins, Acts xxii. 16; Col. ii. 11, 12, and are admitted into the body of Christ or put on Christ, Gal. iii. 27, 1 Cor. xii. 13, this last not without the accompanying spirit.

From these passages it would appear that baptism, as the sacrament of cleansing and separation from sin through the atonement of Christ, sets forth both God's provision of grace and our act of laying hold upon that provision. As God hath established this ordinance in the Church, He publicly sets forth before all the world the provisions of His saving grace, whereby we may be cleansed from our sins. And as we avail ourselves of this ordinance either for ourselves or for our children, we publicly declare our faith in

the power of Christ to save us from our sins, and our submission of heart and life to be saved from sin. It is at once the symbol or outward form or embodiment of our act of faith and of God's act of saving grace. And wherever there is in the ordinance the inner spirit of faith there is also the inner spirit of grace.

This renunciation of sin is once for all, and hence baptism is but once.

II. *The Subjects of Baptism.*

All admit that adult penitent believers are proper subjects for baptism. This is already evident from the various New Testament examples of reception of the ordinance.

The question upon which the Church has been divided is, are children admitted? The passage in which Baptism is first introduced into the Christian Church at its very foundation seems to be conclusive on this point. "Repent ye, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ unto the remission of your sins; and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. For to you is the promise, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call unto Him." This is further strengthened by the mention of baptism of men with their house as of Lydia, the Philippian jailer and others. The general usage and ideas of the time, both under Hebrew and Roman law, would make this perfectly natural to and expected by

those to whom Christianity first came. Modern individualism was to them a thing unknown as breaking up the family into units. Both in religion and in civil status, to the Roman the family was one and indivisible. So to the Hebrew from the very foundation of the covenant of circumcision, the children had been admitted into the provision, and had received the sign of the Covenant. Under the Christian dispensation baptism is the sign and seal of the New Covenant as appears very clearly in Col. ii. 11, 12. To exclude his children from the New Covenant would to the Hebrew father be the occasion of such painful surprise, that the absence of any reference to such a difficulty is proof that it could not and did not occur.

The nature of the Sacrament further sustains this contention. It is the initial sign and seal of the New Covenant, in which we engage to separation from all sin and consecration to God, and God sets forth to us the covenant blessings of His salvation under the analogy of the Old Covenant, Col. ii. 11, 12. Into such a covenant it was perfectly competent for parents to enter their children under all the ideas of moral and legal responsibility prevailing at that time; and these ideas are fully supported by our best moral convictions to-day. More than that the religious faith of every parent lays hold of the covenant blessings for his children under the very impulse of renewed parental affection. It is to this feeling of parental love and faith that Peter appeals when

he says, "to you and to your children"; and the whole history of Christianity proves how powerful this religious affection and faith has proved in the Christian world. Corresponding to this is the covenant obligation enforced by St Paul to "nurture" our "children in the chastening and admonition of the Lord." And we are admonished not to provoke our children "that they be not discouraged." So the children are exhorted to "obey their parents in the Lord," "for this is well pleasing in the Lord." The force of the expression here "in the Lord" can scarcely mean other than that Paul regarded these children as with their parents in the covenant of Christ's grace. By baptism they too had "put on Christ." The expression "nurture" speaks of them as babes, but it is "in the discipline and admonition of the Lord"; and the discouragement against which parents are warned is not discouragement merely in filial duty, but in that service which is "well pleasing in the Lord."

Finally, all this seems established beyond question by the Spirit and words of Christ touching children. He who said "Suffer the little children to come unto Me; forbid them not, for of such is the Kingdom of God," and "took them up in His arms and blessed them," surely never intended to refuse to them the covenant privileges which they had enjoyed under the old dispensation, and the relations to religion which were acknowledged in all the heathen world.

The doctrine which thus appears to be un-

mistakably set forth in Scripture is upheld by the practice of the primitive Church. The earliest known controversy on the subject proves it then to be, not a new usage sought to be established, but an existing thing which some were anxious to abolish. This certainly places the burden of proof on those who deny children admission to the Church by baptism.

III. *The Mode of Baptism.*

The precise mode of administration has varied in the Church between immersion, pouring and sprinkling. The question is one of minor importance, but has received quite undue attention in later times. There is in Scripture no minute description of baptism, such as occurs in the ecclesiastical writers even of early times. Attempts have therefore been made to deduce a divinely authorised mode.

1. From the word *βαπτιζω* itself. The word *βαπτω* certainly means to dip or immerse in water or liquid, and hence to dye. *βαπτιζω* is the regular frequentative or intensive form, signifying to dip frequently, to plunge, or overwhelm or drown. From this came a secondary meaning to wash or cleanse, as that was commonly done by plunging in water, as is to be seen in many places in the old world still. From this the word came to be used of washing without much regard to method; and in this significance passed to the religious rite which evidently signifies a symbolic washing.

It is quite evident that in many cases this was not performed by immersion.

2. From the incidental expressions of Scripture. These again are quite inconclusive. Philip and the eunuch went down to or into the water; εἰς the preposition used may mean either, it is used after verbs of motion towards; and they came up from or out of the water, ἐκ being capable of either meaning. But under either significance, the terms do not imply immersion; and the catacomb pictures of the rite represent the baptized as standing in the water which was being poured or thrown upon his head. To the Scripture record the matter is thus one of entire indifference, something which it did not occur to the writers to mention. Hence here as in the Lord's Supper punctilious emphasis of form savours of mere ritualism, and is inconsistent with the free, spiritual, common-sense spirit of Christianity. The earliest ecclesiastical writers as the Didache favour liberty, varying the form to meet the necessity of circumstances.

The Lord's Supper.

Many of the fundamental principles of sacramental doctrine which we have already considered under baptism apply here. In the scriptural statements on the subject, we find the same prominence given to the human side as in the first sacrament. It is something which in its very institution we are commanded to "do in remem-

brance." Hence it is presented as an act of religious probation rather than as a mechanically operative channel of grace. But while we may avoid views that savour of occult efficacy from the mere outward performance of the act, as inconsistent with the moral and intelligent character of Christianity, we may yet in an intelligent probational sense regard it as an established channel through which God communicates grace, as well as an institution by which it is set forth to us.

As to the proper partakers of this sacrament, and even as to the essentials of its administration, there is, at least among Protestants, no serious dispute. All agree that those who by baptism have been admitted into the membership of the Church, and who worthily continue in that fellowship, are properly partakers; and that its outward form is the eating of bread and the drinking of wine, with remembrance of the words of Christ at the original institution and with eucharistic prayer. The inner spiritual significance of this act, as a form of service ordained for His Church by Christ Himself, may be gathered most clearly from the narrative of institution. This is given by Matthew, ch. xxvi. 17-30; by Mark, ch. xiv. 22-25; by Luke, ch. xxii. 7-18; and by St Paul, 1 Cor. xi. 23-25. In each of these passages the essential points are the same. The institution followed the annual Passover meal which Christ had just celebrated with His disciples. The Passover was one of the two fundamental ordi-

nances of the ancient covenant, neglect of which involved the extreme penalty, "He shall be cut off from the congregation of Israel." This of itself was most suggestive of the importance, the nature and the perpetuity of the ordinance.

From the record itself it is clearly seen that it is a covenant ordinance, a sign and seal of the New Covenant. "This cup is the new covenant in My blood, even that which is poured out for you." In one of the records "remission of sins" is expressly mentioned in connection with this covenant in the blood of Christ; in the others, it is implied in the expression which is poured out or "shed for you." The whole reference is to the ancient form of covenant sealed with sacrificial offering. The terms of this covenant we have quoted from Jeremiah in Heb. viii. 8-13. This epistle might very appropriately be called the covenant epistle, from the frequency and fulness with which it sets forth Christianity under this ancient form.

Again, in the words of Christ, it is a memorial ordinance. "This do in remembrance of Me." This was another link connecting it with the Passover; that too was a memorial throughout all generations. This is expanded by St Paul when he adds, "As often as ye eat this bread and drink this cup, ye proclaim the Lord's death till He come."

The words of institution again present it as an eating of Christ's body and a drinking of His blood; "Take eat; this is My body." "Drink

ye all of it, for this is My blood." The interpretation of this language is given by our Lord Himself, John vi. 27-59, and is clearly to be understood not physically but spiritually. Paul unites the whole Church in this act, so that it becomes a "Communion," a partaking together of Christ, feeding upon Him in our hearts by faith.

On these three fundamental ideas of this sacrament St Paul and the Epistle to the Hebrews throw further light. Sin against this Covenant is most heinous sin. The Covenant sanctioned and sealed by the blood of Christ must not be broken; sin against it is death. It is trampling "under foot the Son of God," and counting "the blood of the Covenant wherewith He was sanctified an unholy thing," as well as doing "despite unto the Spirit of grace." So Paul warns us not to unite the Lord's table with that of devils; and that "Whosoever shall eat the bread or drink the cup of the Lord unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and the blood of the Lord; and he that eateth and drinketh, eateth and drinketh judgment unto himself, if he discern not the body." Hence the important injunction, "Let a man prove himself, and so let him eat of the bread and drink of the cup."

This sacrament thus stands before us as—

1. A solemn covenant act, in which God on His part sets before us the promises of His grace in Christ sealed to us by the blood of His Son, and we on our part enter into this covenant, solemnly witnessing it by the precious blood of the Covenant.

2. A perpetual commemoration of the death of Christ until His coming again.

3. A solemn partaking together by faith of the grace that is in the Atonement.

The Communion of Saints.

The sequel to the day of Pentecost is described in the second chapter of Acts as follows: "There were added to them that day about three thousand souls. And they continued steadfastly in the teaching of the Apostles and the fellowship, the breaking of bread and the prayers." We have ventured on a little more literal rendering than even the Revised Version, using their text. Here, after the baptism of the three thousand, four things are mentioned as constituting their daily religious life. Each of these is used in a definite and specific sense. The Apostolic teaching became a regular institution or ordinance of the Church. So with the prayers which had already been so regarded in the Hebrew worship, where the daily hour of prayer was observed in the temple. The breaking of bread was not only a name for a Jewish meal, but became the designation of the Christian religious meal, "The supper of the Lord." The associated terms thus clearly indicate that the word fellowship also denoted a form of religious exercise common in the early Church. The word is used with the article, as in each of the other three cases, and would thus appear to have the same specific meaning. We have already

seen that the Lord's Supper is itself called a fellowship, but here it is designated by another term; and in the passage where the term communion is applied to it, it is with specific addition, "The communion of the body of Christ," a partaking together "of the Lord's table." But besides this specific application the term occurs several times in the New Testament in a more general sense, and yet specifically Christian. Paul addresses the Corinthians as called into the fellowship of God's Son. He thanks God for the fellowship of the Philippians in furtherance of the Gospel, speaks of the fellowship in the ministry to the saints, and also applies the term generally to common religious work.

The fellowship of the saints would thus appear in the Apostolic Church to be that unity first of spirit, then of acts of worship, and again of good works, which made their religious life a common one. This at times went even so far as the community of property in the things necessary for life. Unnecessary property was disposed of and charities were replaced by a common enjoyment of the needs of life from a common stock created by the contributions of all. It does not appear that the practice of the Apostolic Church took this form universally, or even frequently; but there was at least one conspicuous example of it in the primitive Church at Jerusalem. But while this temporal form of fellowship varied, the spiritual appears to have developed to a frequent means of grace. The Church assembled,

not only to partake of the Lord's Supper and listen to the instructions of the Apostles, prophets and other teachers, and for united prayer, but also for mutual edification and comfort by means of psalms, exhortations, and the mutual contributions of their experience of the Spirit. This had become in the Corinthian Church not only an established institution, but had even deteriorated so as to require correction at the hand of the Apostle. It would appear to be this form of religious exercise, which was not unlike a part of the Jewish synagogue worship, that is referred to as "the fellowship" in connection with the other means of grace. It was quite distinguished from the formal Jewish exercises in which any member might take part, by the gifts of the Spirit, and especially by its warm religious affection and earnestness; and its usefulness as a means of grace depended most directly upon the presence and power of the Holy Spirit. In every age characterised by a revival of this power in the Church this form of religious exercise reappears in some form of societies or meetings for the more intimate spiritual intercourse of congenial spirits. It is the direct result of our social nature and of the eminently social character of Christianity, and vindicates its claim as a means of grace, not only by its existence in the Apostolic Church, but also by its spontaneous reappearance wherever an earnest and deeply spiritual Christianity is found. In the great revival of our own age it has played a most

important part, in various forms of assemblies for Christian conference and testimony, and in religious "retreats" and "quiet days," to say nothing of its more formal establishment in Methodism and the Society of Friends.

But it is a religious exercise which perhaps least of all will endure the touch of lifeless formalism. Its whole power lies in the genuineness of its emotion and affection, its hearty and spontaneous expression, and the presence and power of the Holy Spirit in both speakers and hearers. These lacking, it becomes the most empty of forms, without even the merit of prepared intellectual excellence, and perhaps best serves the interests of spiritual religion by disappearing for the time from the stated exercises of the Church. This at least has been its history in the past; its perpetuity has been in direct relation to the continued presence and power of the Holy Spirit.

CHAPTER IV

THE LORD'S DAY

FROM the earliest times the requirements of all forms of religion have led to the setting apart of fixed days for public worship. These have been at the same time seasons of rest, or cessation from the ordinary employments of life, that all might have an opportunity for worship. The sentiment which so widely developed this usage in the very early history of our race is without doubt a right one, whether viewed from the moral or the religious point of view. Such institutions are the outcome of our deepest and truest moral and religious feeling, and are thus, apart even from the special light of inspiration, quite rightly represented as commands of God. The origin of the Hebrew weekly Sabbath dates beyond the remembrance of history. It is placed by their Scriptures as one of three laws wrought by God into His work of creation, the law of marriage, the law of labour, and the law of Sabbath rest. This representation is not a fancy or a religious myth, but expresses at once a physical, a moral, and a religious truth which the whole history of humanity has served to verify. As many of the old Hebrew religious ordinances were founded in physiological law, and

so confirmed their claim to be ordained of God, so especially these three laws. Among no other people were they developed to the same perfection of practical working as among the Hebrew people. While their marriage institutions were not yet perfect, as admitting though not encouraging polygamy and concubinage, they were far in advance of other nations, and make decided advance in the course of the Old Testament, until we find the prophets almost anticipating the perfect principle announced by Christ Himself. So the Hebrew Sabbath law indicates not only a high ideal of religious consecration, but also a deep insight into the moral principles involved, as well as into its industrial, social, and physical utility. The three principles involved in the Hebrew Sabbath law are these—

1. It is holy, *i.e.* set apart to God for His service and worship.

2. It is a day of rest. The law enforces the duty of labour. "Six days shalt thou labour and do all thy work." But it equally enforces the duty of rest. "The seventh is the rest of the Lord thy God; in it thou shalt not do any work."

3. It is a day of rest not merely for each individual, but for the whole industrial or labour circle to which he belongs. His children, his servants, his cattle, the stranger within his gates, all have a divinely ordered moral right in this rest. The Sabbath law thus involved the subordination of all mere commercial or industrial

interests, and no one was more sensitive to these or valued them more highly than the Jew, the subordination of these to the right of rest of his own body and mind, and to the same Divine right of all who shared or performed his labour, down to the very brute beasts themselves. It thus involved the broad principle of the rights of labour over man's natural and lawful desire for gain.

This law was enforced by the consideration of two great facts in nature and history. First, in nature, God works and rests. The account of Creation itself was shaped to emphasize this fact, and so enforce the law upon the minds of the Hebrew people. Again, in their history, their whole nation had once been in industrial bondage. They should therefore never forget the weary heart of the slave and the stranger.

But the Hebrew law of the Sabbath while thus founded in the grandest and most universal of religious and moral principles, and while most beneficent in its spirit, was in its Hebrew development turned aside from its purpose. Like the whole Mosaic dispensation, it tended to rest in the letter, even to the sacrifice of the Spirit. Minute rules for the observance of the Sabbath were enacted; the penalty of Sabbath breaking was death, and our Lord Himself narrowly escaped being stoned because He had healed a sick man on the Sabbath day. Against the entire spirit of this narrow legalism our Lord protests when He says, "The Sabbath was made for man,

and not man for the Sabbath." He likewise proclaims the subordination even of this ancient, honoured, and most important institution to the demands of the new religious age and spirit which He came to bring to the world. "The Son of Man is Lord also of the Sabbath." As a consequence of this incurable imperfection into which it had fallen, and of the utter incompatibility of the Pharisaic idea of the Sabbath with the new Christian spirit, we find quite early in the history of Christianity, the Jewish Sabbath sharing the fate of the other Jewish institutions which, decaying and waxing old, were ready to pass away. Paul as the leader of the new ideas especially recognised this. Where the old observances did no harm he quietly permitted them or even conformed to them, but where they served to reintroduce the old spirit of legal bondage, he hesitated not to speak out most distinctly. "Let no man judge you, in meat or in drink, or in respect of a feast day, or a new moon, or a Sabbath day, which are a shadow of the things to come, but the body is Christ's." The men who observed the old ordinances were not to be harshly condemned, unless, as in the case of Galatians, they had fallen back from grace into legalism; but the new spirit of the Gospel would create its own body, its own expression of the Christian spirit.

Thus it was that quietly, as the Kingdom of God which cometh not with observation, the Lord's day replaced the Jewish Sabbath, repre-

senting the more perfect moral and religious conceptions of the new faith. There is no formal enactment or precept; we simply find the first day of the week early in the Apostolic history as the new day of Christian assembly. About A.D. 59 or 60 this day was already so established in the Church that on it at Troas Paul meets the disciples to break bread, and preached till midnight, ready to depart on the morrow; and to the Corinthian church he gives direction, that on the same day they should make their collection for the suffering saints at Jerusalem. A little later the revelator speaks of the same day as the Lord's day. Thus quietly, like every other external or formal institution of the infant Church, the new day grew up with the new sacraments, the new ministry, and the new church, under the inspiration and guidance of the spirit of new life. The outward fact which selected this day was doubtless the Resurrection. It thus, like the Hebrew Sabbath, became a commemoration of a most Christian event.

It now only remains for us to gather up the new Christian ideas of the nature and obligations of the Christian institution. These we may readily gather from its relation to the old law, and to the new religious faith and ethical spirit; and more directly and particularly from the words of Christ and His Apostles.

1. As historically and *de facto* the Lord's day has in the Christian Church replaced the Jewish Sabbath, so, like every other new institution

occupying such a relation, it embodies and continues the great fundamental moral and religious elements of the old Sabbath. These we have seen to be religious worship, rest from labour, and the calling to halt of the entire industrial spirit, that all men, and even the very cattle, may enjoy this right of rest from labour, and of worship of God. Historically and practically the Lord's day in these three respects stepped into the void left by the desuetude of the Jewish Sabbath with its other institutions. As Christianity, like Judaism, recognised the obligation of public assembly for the worship of God, so this became the day of such assembly. And as such assembly required rest from ordinary work, so this became the day of such rest, and as Christian parents and masters desired their children and household to enjoy with them the privileges of the Christian worship, it became the day and means of recognition of their rights of rest and worship.

2. At the same time, while inheriting and continuing the moral and religious spirit of the old day, the new day was completely free from all the narrow ritual, legal, and technical ordinances which hedged around the old day, and made its observance a burden, which even conservative Peter says, "Neither our fathers nor we were able to bear." It was no longer a day of punctilious scruples as to whether it be right to do this or lawful to do that; all these had been swept away with the spirit of legalism. Wherever possible it called its people to the assembly with a glad

heart of willing worship. For this purpose it was a privilege as well as a duty to lay aside the labours of every-day life; and with glad spirit the rights and privileges of worship and rest were accorded to all. But there is no hint that the new day laid a legal burden on tender consciences such as had for ages been imposed by the old. Any such thing in the circumstances of the infant Church would have been fatal if not monstrous. The great majority perhaps of the early Gentile Christians were slaves in the households of heathen masters. To them came no day of rest or privileges of worship. But to add to their privations the sting of a guilty conscience would have been abhorrent to the very spirit of Christianity. On the other hand, they were taught that to the eye of God all days and times and places were alike; and hence, if in the order of His wise providence, their lot fell in slavery, the service of the heart took the place of the outward assembly. And if for their weary frames came no day of rest, there still remained a better rest for the people of God. To their broader Christian view all time is God's and is holy; and all work is rest when done for Him and with His peace in the heart. The new law of Christianity was thus a law of liberty and not of legal scrupulosity and quibbling with conscience. But at the same time its moral condemnation rested severe as ever upon the man who honoured not God in his day of worship, who robbed his own life of its portion of rest and communion with God, and who robbed his fellow-men

through greed of gain or lust of pleasure, of their rights of rest and worship.

The Christian Sabbath, for the old term is still applicable, ours too is a rest, thus stands out on the broad platform of religion, justice, and mercy. Its obligation is not any arbitrary command or even positive precept, but great moral principles. Its observance is not in the letter of legal ordinances, but in spirit and in truth. It is itself a necessity to religion, a boon to toiling humanity, a bulwark to all good things, and a strength to national life and character. In the highest possible sense we can apply to it our Lord's words, "The Sabbath was made for man and not man for the Sabbath."

It may be asked what is the relation of the Lord's day to otherwise lawful recreation and amusement? From the moral principles which we have had before us the answer is very easy. If the Lord's day is the day of worship, the riot and physical toil of public amusements or private recreations is by that very fact excluded. Communion with nature, converse with friends, quiet restful contemplation are all in harmony with its spirit and institution. But to the true Christian spirit the question cannot arise, can I devote part of my Sabbath to the sports and amusements of modern life? Every one of its three fundamental moral ends would be violated by such a practice. It is no longer the Lord's day, *i.e.* the day of religious life, nor a day of rest, as all will know who have watched a weary crowd returning from

a show, nor can it do other than seriously infringe the rights of rest and worship of a large number of our fellow-men whom we employ as the servants of our pleasures. The relation of the Sabbath to legal enactment is a distinct question rather of jurisprudence than of religious ethics. Religion certainly cannot be enforced by law, and spiritual Christianity never can encourage any attempt in that direction. From the side of jurisprudence on the other hand, it may reasonably be held that the law has a perfect right to protect, especially working people and the Christian public generally, from the encroachments of a mercenary and irreligious spirit upon the people's day of rest and worship.

DIVISION VIII
THE CONSUMMATION OF CHRIST'S KINGDOM, AND THE LAST THINGS

CHAPTER I

THE KINGDOM OF CHRIST

CHRISTIANITY was from its very foundation far more than a system of doctrines representing individual and personal religious faith. It was also far more than a discipline of personal perfection of moral and religious character. It was again far more than an organised form of united worship of God, whether national or ecclesiastical. From the very first its field of view was world-wide and age-long. These thoughts are now so familiar to us that we can with difficulty conceive of their unfamiliar and startling aspect, when first introduced to the world. Men so lived within their own narrow circle, and so despised the outside world, were so occupied with their personal and national ambitions, and so indifferent to those of their fellow-men except as linked with their own, that a sympathy which embraced all humanity and a hope which reached out for humanity through all the ages, was, outside of true religious faith, a thing unknown.

Even to-day the best that the philosophy of history can give us is the idea of an evolution slowly but surely moving toward perfection. But from the very beginning all these things were fundamental and familiar elements of the new Christian faith.

The language of Christ Himself is everywhere the language of a universal sympathy, a universal responsibility, and the certainty of a universal triumph. No two things can present a more striking contrast than the narrowness of the Jews of His day, and His own universalism. It is not only that His moral and religious principles were so perfect as to admit of universal application, though that is true and is a most significant fact. But He founded those principles on the idea of a Fatherhood universal and impartial as the sunlight or the falling of the rain; and He commanded a love as wide as that of this Father in heaven. And He makes the coming in of the Kingdom of this Father the subject of universal prayer.

Again in His teaching there was the most absolute effacement of all class distinctions and artificial boundaries which divide men. He knew men only as men and in their moral character and needs. Even the distinctions of kindred were effaced in His deeper view of these universal interests of men as men. These principles are especially conspicuous in the parables of the Kingdom. "He that soweth the good seed is the Son of Man; and the field is the world; and the

good seed, these are the sons of the Kingdom; and the tares are the sons of the evil one; and the enemy that soweth them is the devil; and the harvest is the end of the world." The grain of mustard seed and the leaven afforded other illustrations of these ideas. We meet them again in such expressions as, "I, if I be lifted up will draw all men unto Me"; and in His teaching of the universal resurrection and judgment. Finally His last words, and His commission to His Apostles set them forth in unmistakable terms.

The Spirit of Pentecost was equally universal; it was a pouring out of the Spirit of God upon all flesh, and it at once founded the Church with a world-wide ambition, responsibility and faith. Peter's narrower ideas would indeed have made this faith impossible of realisation, but he himself was imbued with the faith nevertheless; and with Paul came the wider and more perfect doctrine of Christ which knew in Him neither Jew nor Gentile, bond nor free, male nor female, barbarian nor Scythian, but regarded all as one in Christ Jesus.

Out of such a foundation there early arose in the Church a firm faith in a glorious consummation of the Kingdom, as well as a deep sense of responsibility and enthusiasm for its advancement. Our Lord Himself had dwelt more largely upon the difficulties of its progress. Like a wise leader, He did not underrate the opposition to be overcome, or lead His followers to expect an easy victory. He prepared them for labour and conflict, and even for persecution and death; but

laid upon their consciences the responsibilities of duty, and sent them forth to be heroes and martyrs, with hope only in God. But as under the Pentecostal outpouring of the Spirit the harvest of the world seemed to be at once coming in, and the Gospel swept its way out through the nations of the Roman Empire, reaching its far confines even in the Apostolic age, their hopes grew very high that the consummation of Christ's Kingdom was near at hand. Our Lord Himself had refused to dwell upon this topic as something which the Father had not put into His human ministry, and which was still hidden in the counsels of God. To their crude and earthly conceptions it could not yet be revealed. But Paul saw clearly that the conflict with evil was not yet ended, that the power of evil was still entrenched in the vast Roman Empire, and that this man of sin must be revealed, before the triumph of the Spiritual Kingdom. A little later the Book of Revelation unfolds this great opposition in its successive stages, and expresses the faith of the Church in the final triumph of Christ's Kingdom of truth represented by the New Jerusalem, descending from heaven.

The faith thus early developed never left the Church. It has often been sadly perverted in a way to thwart the very consummation after which it aspired; but either in degenerate or in revived Apostolic form it has survived the centuries.

In its Apostolic form this faith involved the responsibility of Christ's commission to carry the

Gospel to all the nations. Christ Himself had said, "This gospel of the Kingdom shall be preached in the whole world for a testimony unto all the nations; and then shall the end come." And so in answer to the question, "Lord, dost Thou at this time restore the Kingdom to Israel?" He said, "It is not for you to know times or seasons which the Father hath set within His own authority. But ye shall receive power, when the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be My witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judæa and Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth." In both these passages the coming of Christ's Kingdom is implicitly associated with the supreme duty and work of His Church for which the Holy Spirit gives power. Perhaps the most significant and promising sign of our own age is the hold which this duty has taken upon the heart of the modern Church, and the fact that to-day in almost every nation the Gospel is preached at least in some measure.

This Apostolic faith also involved an unceasing conflict with the great powers of evil in their varied forms, resulting in their final overthrow. It is only in the first passage last quoted, after the tribulation of this conflict in which the followers of Christ shall be hated of all nations for His sake, that the sign of the Son of Man shall appear in heaven. Paul at once foresees and describes this conflict. "It will not be except the falling away come first, and the man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition, he that opposeth and exalteth

himself against all that is called God or is worshipped; so that he sitteth in the temple of God, setting himself forth as God." And this "mystery of lawlessness doth already work, only there is one that restraineth now, until he be taken out of the way. And then shall be revealed the lawless one whom the Lord Jesus shall slay with the breath of His mouth and bring to nought by the manifestation of His coming." These passages when interpreted not as mere pictures of the imagination, but as presenting in figurative language the generalisation of great historic facts, call up the unceasing battle of the Church with error and sin in their entrenched institutions in the world's political, social, intellectual, and industrial life.

Again this faith embraces the coming in of "the fulness" of both Jew and Gentile. As held by Paul it expects that "all Israel shall be saved"; and "if their fall is the riches of the world, and their loss the riches of Gentiles, how much more their fulness?" This fulness of the Jews he expects when also "the fulness of the Gentiles is come in." It is well to notice the terms used by Paul. They are not absolute, and are quite in harmony with his ideas of individual responsibility and freedom. But they express a firm faith in the salvation of the great majority of the race, "the fulness" of both Jew and Gentile, and in the high perfection and spiritual power of the Church, new "life from the dead," and in the glorious regeneration of humanity, "the riches

of the world." These all go together, spiritual life and power in the Church, numbers saved, and all the institutions of human life purified and glorified.

Lastly, this is itself the coming in of the Kingdom, and the Lord's coming again, for which we pray. The mistaken visions of our day of a material coming and an earthly kingdom in Jerusalem are based upon the same literalism and materialism and secularism which characterised the Pharisees in our Lord's day. They held fast to the prophetic and Messianic faith, but so deformed it that when He came they knew Him not. So to-day when the morning dawn of the Millennium is already upon us, and its early rays should be a trumpet call to the Church to perfect the things that remain, and not by idle waiting, but by energetic work to bring in the coming of the Lord, and to wait for Him clad in the spotless purity of holy life, and decked in all the glorious fruits of the fulness of the Spirit, it would indeed be a sad mistake if we stood idly waiting for lights in the sky and a visible descent of Christ from heaven, and a material presence on earth and a royal court at Jerusalem to accomplish the work which can only be accomplished by the proclamation of the truth in the power of the Spirit. Thus alone will come the new heavens and the new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness. Let the whole Church pray, "Thy Kingdom come"; and all the world respond, "Amen: come, Lord Jesus."

CHAPTER II

DEATH AND THE INTERMEDIATE STATE

THE four remaining topics of theology are usually embraced under the designation of eschatology or the doctrine of the last things. They follow the soul of man departing this life into the unseen world. They deal with death and the separate state, the resurrection of the body, the final judgment and the eternal states.

In entering upon these topics we may note—

1. That only great principles linking these things to present life and duty are presented in the Christian faith. All mere gratification of curiosity is excluded by the very nature of the revelation. If it were a mechanical revelation working *ab extra* by occult processes, then it might like modern spiritualism profess to answer any question. But working in conscience and religious faith through the historic facts of human life and history, it must link all our faith or hope or fear of the future with the actual facts of the present. What goes beyond that is the mere play of the imagination.

2. That the faith thus revealed is not only held in closest practical relation to the facts of the present, but is expressed in language

borrowed from the things of time. This is the only language which we understand at present, and hence the only possible form in which these thoughts can be clothed. But we should keep strictly before us the fact that now we see through a glass darkly, and that here religion may easily be reduced to superstition by the error of a literal and materialistic interpretation.

3. That the silence of the New Testament is to be noted, as well as its direct teaching. Any attempt to break that silence by forced interpretation or by invented additions is useless.

4. That here the analogy of faith in the past unfolding of spiritual things is specially useful.

Death.

The first step into this beyond is death. There can be no doubt that even to Christian faith this is something abnormal, something from which we shrink as from pain. Hence to Paul's religious insight it is the result of sin, "death by sin," and "the wages of sin is death." Hence it is something not so much to be glorified and transformed into an entrance into a higher life, as something to be abolished, conquered, put under our feet. Christ hath "abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the Gospel"; and through Him, "Death is swallowed up in victory." Even the sufferings of this life do not to the Christian make death

in itself desirable; it is only the higher state which lies beyond which is to be desired; "not for that we would be unclothed, but that we would be clothed upon, that what is mortal may be swallowed up of life." That which Christianity does for us in this life is to deliver us from the fear of death. It makes us forget the momentary pain in the "far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory." It forgets death itself, thinking only of the things on each side; "to depart and be with Christ" which would be for me "very far better," or "to abide in the flesh which is more needful for your sake."

As presented in the New Testament death includes—

1. The dissolution of the body. It is thus to Paul the decaying of the outward man, the dissolution of the earthly house of our tabernacle, to Peter, the putting off of this tabernacle. But it will be seen that each one of these terms implies the superiority of the Spirit, and that in this the true man, the inner man or the hidden man of the heart consists. Hence—

2. The separation of the Spirit, its "departure," and its passage into another form of existence known in theology as

The Intermediate State.

The terms by which this new state of existence is described are quite varied, but all except one borrowed from without. It is in the New Testa-

ment generally termed Hades, the place of the dead, the term used by the Greeks for the same purpose and by the Hellenistic Jews to translate the Hebrew *Sheol*, which expressed the same idea. It is also called Paradise, a term borrowed from the Persians, and which found its way into the Jewish religious vocabulary after the Captivity. Both these terms illustrate the broad unity of religious faith in some of these fundamental conceptions. Two other terms are peculiarly Hebrew, one "Abraham's bosom," used by our Lord belonging to the later Judaism, and the other "gathered to his fathers," used once by St Paul carrying us back to the earliest period of the Hebrew faith. Finally Paul gives us an expression absolutely and uniquely Christian, "being with Christ" or "with the Lord," founded perhaps on our Lord's own words in His Passover discourse, "I come again, and will receive you unto Myself; that where I am there ye may be also."

These terms are themselves not without significance. The first points to the mystery of death—it is the entrance to the invisible or shadowy world. But all the others express a positive religious faith which links this present life with that to come. This faith is very much enlarged by other New Testament expressions, in which it more fully appears. From these it appears as—

1. A state of real continued existence. Certainly the parable of the rich man and Lazarus,

in which our Lord sets forth the common Jewish faith of His time with a strong ethical application, at least implies this. So especially our Lord's words of encouragement to the thief on the Cross. Again, His argument in reply to the Sadducees, "God is not the God of the dead, but of the living," is most direct and conclusive here. One cannot avoid the conclusion that He believed in the continuous life of the soul. The words which we have already quoted from St Paul lead to the same conclusion.

2. A state of conscious existence. This is, perhaps, as much implied in the words just referred to as continuous existence. Paul's being with the Lord and his "very far better" both imply this; and even the Jewish Paradise includes as much and more. The same is presented in many beautiful passages in Revelation. The souls under the altar waiting and praying are not represented as being in an unconscious sleep.

3. A state of rest, *i.e.* not of cessation from all activity, but of release from the struggle and toil of probational life. Hence probation must be completed and its responsibility discharged before "the night cometh, when no man can work"; and "the dead which die in the Lord" "rest from their labours" and are "blessed" "for their works follow with them."

4. Hence not a probational state, which always implies effort, striving, the toil and labour of life, and is rigidly determined by works. "Before the

judgment seat of Christ each one shall receive the things done in the body."

5. Already a state of separation between the righteous and the wicked. Each at death goes to his own place. This belongs to the very heart of the parable of Dives and Lazarus, which may thus be taken as our Lord's assertion of this doctrine. Already the great gulf is fixed.

6. Hence to the righteous a state of blessedness and to the wicked of torment. The blessedness of the righteous is even indicated as the fellowship of the holy ; they are with their fathers, with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, but above all with Christ.

7. But yet even to the righteous an imperfect state : hence one of longing and waiting. Paul expected his perfecting at the resurrection, and the souls under the altar cry, " How long ? "

8. Hence one which may include development, not probational, nor yet purgatorial ; there is no New Testament expression looking to either of these ; but as the seed which grows to its full perfection of new life. This seems implied if not expressed in Paul's faith. It is the Spirit of Christ which dwelleth in us which shall quicken our mortal bodies into the resurrection of life. Hence the body which grows from this resurrection seed will be not a " psychical body," but a spiritual.

9. Hence in 1 Thess. v. 13, etc., Paul seems to think of this life as apart by itself, waiting and

perfecting for its season at the coming of the Lord. In such a state may, indeed, lie the equation of the probational advantages of this life, not as a new or an extended probation, but as the unfolding of that which only began here. Something of this seems to be implied when it is said that we to whom come the advantages of the fulness of the Kingdom shall not precede, or have the advantage of those who have been long dead in Christ; and also in the fact that this hidden life is still in the unity of the Church and of Christ.

10. This life ends with the resurrection and the final Judgment.

The Old Testament Doctrine of a Future Life.

Before considering the final elements of the Christian doctrine of a future life, it may be well to consider very briefly the Old Testament doctrine on which it is built. That such a doctrine exists we think quite certain, notwithstanding recent doubts on the subject. The later writers are quite definite, even to the extent of a future judgment following the resurrection of the body. Passages like 2 Macc. vii. 9, 11, 14, etc., show that these at least in a general way were elements of the later Jewish faith. Daniel xii. 2, 3 carries this faith back to the later canon, and possibly Job xix. 25, etc., and Isa. xxvi. 19, Eccles. xii. 14, carry us further still. They all imply at least

the conception of a resurrection of the body and a future judgment.

But the more general idea of a continuance of conscious existence after death and of a place of such existence apart from the grave seems to have been an element of the Hebrew faith from very early times. It is doubtless to the credit of the Hebrew religion that on this point it was by no means as far developed as the religious faith of neighbouring peoples. This is probably due to the fact that it held so strongly to the common-sense foundation of historic fact, and did not allow the imagination large play, even in the expression of religious faith, much less in furnishing its content. If, however, we examine carefully its use of two terms, we can scarcely doubt that they are used with a general faith in a conscious future life, and with an idea of a definite place of such continuous existence.

The first of these is "hereafter." Into this word is put the very strongest moral significance. That significance, which is the very kernel of the doctrine of a future existence, is asserted in full consciousness of what appear to be the moral inequalities of this life. "I have seen the wicked in great power and spreading himself like a green tree in his native soil." "But one passed by, and, lo, he was not, yea, I sought him but he could not be found. Mark the perfect man and behold the upright, for the latter end (hereafter) of that man is peace." It is scarcely possible to

assign to this statement of faith a significance equal to the enthusiasm of its expression unless we carry the "hereafter" here set forth beyond the grave.

This is still more clearly the significance from the very form of expression in the proverb, "The wicked is thrust down in his evil-doing, but the righteous hath hope in his death." Hope in death must either itself take hold of a future life, or at least imply a state of being from which our conscious interest continues in the things of this present life.

The second term is Sheol. That this term is frequently used for the grave is quite evident. And so in many cases escape from Sheol is not a resurrection from the dead but escape from death itself. But while we may admit this, there are other passages in which the word seemingly cannot be otherwise used than as the place of conscious existence beyond death. Isa. xiv. 9, etc., presents an exceedingly highly wrought picture of this kind which certainly contains the conception, even if we do not affirm that it asserts the doctrine.

Again, the hope expressed in Ps. xlix. 15 can scarcely express other than a hope of a future life with God. "God shall redeem my soul from the power of Sheol, for He shall receive me." It will be seen that this is not a mere escape from death. The Psalmist is rather asserting the universal dominion of death. Of men even the greatest he has just asserted: "They are ap-

pointed as a flock for Sheol, death shall be their shepherd." "But God shall redeem my soul," etc., not that he too should not die, but "God shall receive me." There is surely in this a hope almost Christian in its character, though yet so dimly expressed.

CHAPTER III

THE RESURRECTION AND THE JUDGMENT

OUR review of the Old Testament doctrine of the future life makes it clear that even in the view which religious faith takes of death and the intermediate state which lies immediately beyond, Christianity had made large advance upon the ancient Hebrew faith. Death, while still maintaining its stern severity, is completely conquered by the power of this new faith, and the life beyond becomes illuminated by the presence of Christ and the society of the blessed, until we are quite ready with Paul to say that He hath brought life and immortality to light through the Gospel. The New Testament writers are quite conscious of this change with its enlargement and clearness of vision.

But the advance made by the Christian faith is still more conspicuous when we consider the remaining topics of this doctrine, especially the resurrection and the general judgment. This advance is not altogether without preparation. In the period between the close of the Old Testament Canon and the coming of our Lord, the Jewish conception of these two doctrines had become more definite, and the doctrines

themselves more prominent than we find them even in the latest books of the Old Testament. This prominence and definiteness our Lord fully maintains. But besides this, He both corrects and enlarges the doctrines, placing them upon a completely ethical and spiritual basis, especially stripping them of the notions of exclusive Jewish prerogative which had attached to them.

1. As against the Sadducees He asserted in direct terms the reality of the resurrection, linking it with the general doctrine of immortality and the future life which He asserts as an essential part of the Old Testament faith. "God is not the God of the dead but of the living," for all live to Him. If then He is the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, as Moses asserts, they still live to Him. Another current error which our Lord corrects without even mentioning it was the idea which seems to have found place in some quarters that the resurrection was only of the children of Abraham, whom they believed to be alone the true heirs of the Kingdom of God.

2. This He corrected by asserting in the strongest terms the universality of the resurrection. "The hour cometh in which all that are in the tombs shall hear His voice, and shall come forth, they that have done good unto the resurrection of life, and they that have done ill unto the resurrection of judgment." This Paul puts in the language of the teaching of the Pharisees as "a resurrection both of the just and unjust."

3. He claims the resurrection as especially His

own work, a part of the mediatorial authority or power which He had received from the Father. Hence He says, "I am the Resurrection and the Life; he that believeth on Me, though he were dead, yet shall he live." "For the Father loveth the Son, and sheweth Him all things that Himself doth," and "As the Father raiseth the dead and quickeneth them, even so the Son also quickeneth whom He will." Paul's statement of this is full of interest. "As in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive."

These definite teachings of our Lord are both illustrated and attested as truth by His raising of the dead during His life-time. In fact some of the most remarkable sayings which we have quoted were directly connected with the raising of Lazarus. They were likewise attested by His own resurrection in such a way that Paul makes it the very pivot of Christian faith, "If Christ hath not been raised, then is our preaching vain, your faith also is vain."

To the words of Christ Paul adds two thoughts:

1. The resurrection is through the inworking of the Holy Spirit. "If the Spirit of Him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, He that raised up Christ Jesus from the dead shall quicken also your mortal bodies by His Spirit that dwelleth in you." That the body is built up by the inner life is a profound truth of science as well as of theology. Paul does not apply it to the resurrection of the wicked though it doubtless has its application there as well.

2. The resurrection body thus created anew by the Spirit of life is fitted for the life that is to be. Hence for the new life of the spiritual world it is an incorruptible, glorious, powerful and spiritual body, a body fitted for the perfect life of the world to come. Hence though all may not die "we shall all be changed," and this mortal put on immortality.

Two points much discussed in modern speculation, and apparently one of them mooted in St Paul's time, are not definitely settled by any New Testament declaration.

One is the question of material identity. This was a part of the old Egyptian faith, hence their care in the preservation of the bodies of the dead. The tendency of Paul's teaching is to regard the question as of minor importance. He falls back on the analogy of living nature. "That which thou sowest, thou sowest not the body that shall be, but a bare grain, it may chance of wheat or of some other kind, but God giveth it a body, even as it pleased Him, and to each seed a body of its own." The identity is thus placed in the life and not in matter or even form. Both may be changed with the necessities of new conditions. Paul's method of dealing with this question is remarkably suggestive and instructive. Even his religious faith follows the facts and laws and suggestions of God's world around us as the safest answer to our questions. The passage should be interpreted in Paul's free common-sense spirit.

The other is the question of a first and a second resurrection.

Our Lord in His teaching refers only to a general resurrection of two classes: "They that have done good unto the resurrection of life," and "they that have done ill unto the resurrection of judgment." We have already seen that the faith of the Jewish Church first of all apprehended the resurrection of the just, and that when our Lord came there was still difference of opinion as to the resurrection of all. This His teaching met fully, but He has said nothing that would give ground for the distinction of a first and a second resurrection. Paul in one passage says, "the dead in Christ shall rise first"; but he is comparing them not with the wicked but with the saints who are still alive and who shall with them be caught up into the clouds to meet the Lord in the air." Neither here nor in 1 Cor. xv. is he giving special and separate consideration to the resurrection of the wicked. The doctrine can thus be founded only upon the twentieth chapter of Revelation, which does indeed speak of the first resurrection and the second death. But in a book so largely metaphorical in its language and tropical in its entire presentation, including even the general outline of structure of the book, it would be exceedingly dangerous to found a doctrine upon a literal interpretation of a single passage.

The Judgment.

The doctrine of a general and final judgment following our Lord's second coming, the consummation of His Kingdom, and the general resurrection, has from the beginning formed a most important and influential part of the Christian faith. Doubtless figurative expressions setting forth this faith have too often been transformed into sensible material fact; but the reality and substance of the faith has been maintained even under these materialised forms. Of the substantial Christian faith in the judgment as a fact there is no need of proof. Paul's one word is sufficient. "We must all be made manifest before the judgment seat of Christ." It is only necessary to determine as far as may be the contents of this faith.

1. It is a judgment by Christ at His coming. In interpreting this it must not be forgotten that of His first coming He also said, "For judgment came I into this world." And of this judgment it is said, "He that believeth not is judged already, because he hath not believed on the name of the only begotten Son of God. And this is the judgment, that the light is come into the world, and men loved the darkness rather than the light because their deeds were evil."

2. The judgment is thus a moral discrimination of life and character in the light of truth. "He that rejecteth Me and receiveth not My sayings hath one that judgeth him; the word that I spake the same shall judge him in the last day."

3. It will be universal and individual. We must all be made manifest before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive the "things done in the body according to what he hath done whether it be good or bad."

4. It will separate all men into two great classes, the good and the bad; but the absolute position of each individual will be in strictest justice "according to his works."

5. The judgment will be a final demonstration to each individual conscience of his true moral relation to God and right. The presentation by our Lord in Matt. xxv., the parable of the virgins, the parable of the talents, and the judgment scene all unite in this element. There is in the light of this judgment no longer possibility of self-deception.

6. The judgment will be a new and final manifestation or appearing of the Lord Jesus Christ, perfecting His Kingdom and revealing His glory. It is nowhere said that this coming again will be in the flesh, or in material and bodily form; but it is declared to be in glory and with power, and with all His holy angels, the ministering spirits of His Kingdom. All these may have a purely spiritual significance and may disappoint our earthly conceptions, but the result shall be the final moral demonstration of the rights and wrongs of all time and of all men, and an absolute and final determination of true moral relation to God.

CHAPTER IV

THE FINAL ESTATES

IF we have rightly apprehended the moral significance of the great judgment, it is in itself the culmination and the termination of probation. If probation is at once a development of moral nature and a testing of its will, both proceeding by increment of moral light until the maturity of full responsibility is reached, then such light as the judgment day will throw into the conscience of every man, searching the thoughts and intents of his heart, and concentrating the testing light of moral truth upon every act of his life, must end all probation by declaring where each man stands before God. And if we have understood the nature of probation and its relation to the moral nature of man, then a probation in which the full light of moral truth, and the full power of Divine grace have been together brought to bear upon man for his development and his testing, must result, whether for good or ill, in such maturity as becomes in its very nature an unchanging and unchangeable condition. He that is holy must be holy still, and he that is filthy must be filthy still. This is the awful responsibility of moral nature. Like God or like devil

we must become. Such is the voice even of reason founded upon the facts of our moral nature and history.

But the moral and religious faith of Christianity has grasped this truth in another form; and declares simply as a matter of religious revelation that the final estates are eternal, and in their nature incapable of change. For the righteous there is reserved "an inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away"; while for the wicked they may even in this life reach such moral maturity of wickedness by sinning against light and knowledge, that "it is impossible to renew them again to repentance"; while of the state beyond it is still more positively asserted that "their worm dieth not and their fire is not quenched." The final states are eternal and immutable.

With reference to the positive character of these states only great moral outlines are given; and that often in figurative language which it would be a serious mistake to interpret literally as some have done.

Perhaps the most serious of all declarations of the eternal state of the wicked is the word of our Lord, "eternal sin." This shuts out both annihilation, for sin is positive activity in evil; and future hope, for the sin is eternal.

The religious side of this is a state of wrath. The indignation and wrath of God is declared against every soul of man that doeth evil. The wrath of God is a fearful conception, but one

which every moral being must face as a part of the very responsibility of his moral nature.

Perhaps the most common term to express it is "death." "The end of these things is death." This is "the second death." Here again to base speculation upon the physical meaning of this term would be a most serious mistake. The New Testament gives clear examples of the use of this term to denote a state of separation and alienation from God; and such seems to be its meaning here. Again, it is a state of suffering penalty. It is "the vengeance of eternal fire." It is suffering "punishment, even eternal destruction from the face of the Lord, and from the glory of His might."

Finally, it is a state of unutterable suffering. To express this the New Testament exhausts the vocabulary of pain, both in its physical and mental forms. A deeply religious spirit alone can interpret their meaning without suffering their power, as it stands with exceeding fear in the presence of a holy and just God.

From the terrible contemplation of these awful possibilities it is a relief to turn to the other side of the picture, the future state of the holy, that for which alone God made us in His own image.

Here again the New Testament uses only ethical and spiritual terms. Keeping this future state in closest touch with our present probational life and relations to God, and never for a moment stepping aside to answer speculative or curious questions.

To the aged Paul, after a life of the most active and perhaps the most faithful service ever rendered by a saved sinner, this future presents itself as "the crown of righteousness which the Lord the righteous Judge shall give me at that day: and not only to me, but also to all them that love His appearing." This crown is laid up for such as love the manifestation of right and truth by the righteous Judge, and who, out of a pure conscience can say, "I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith."

And yet from the other side it is "eternal salvation" of which Christ is "the author." Hence even in heaven the song is "Worthy is the Lamb that hath been slain to receive the power, and riches, and wisdom, and might, and honour, and glory, and blessing"; and again, "Salvation unto our God which sitteth on the throne and unto the Lamb." And as such "salvation ready to be revealed in the last time," it is an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and that fadeth not away," upon which we are to enter at the last as the children of God. The promise of this "eternal inheritance" we have received through "the Mediator of the New Covenant." These aspects are purely religious, they spring from our relation to God in Christ.

Another conception of it embraces both. It is a sharing with Christ in His glory, and in His sufferings. As children we are "heirs, heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ if so be that we suffer with Him that we may be also glorified

with Him." Our Lord's presentation of this is one of the most touching love: "Father, that which Thou hast given Me, I will that where I am, they also may be with Me, that they may behold My glory which Thou hast given Me: for Thou lovedst Me before the foundation of the world." He had already promised "I come again and will receive you unto Myself, that where I am there ye may be also."

From this again it is an easy turn of thought to His words of sentence in describing the judgment of the great day: "Come, ye blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world." The final consummation is the unity and perfection of what Paul calls God's purpose or plan of the ages, through which He brings many sons unto glory, crowning them on the throne of the universe, with glory, honour, and immortality. In heaven and on earth, in time and in eternity, there is nothing higher than this Divine image and likeness to which we are restored in Christ. It alone is blessed of the Father. It is in itself as from God, by the knowledge of God, in His likeness, eternal life.

Such is a very feeble presentation, not of a science of theology, but of the leading elements of the RELIGIOUS FAITH which we call Christianity, from Him who is at once its author and its central element. If even imperfectly we have shown that faith to be a harmonious and consistent unity, fitted to the moral and religious

nature of man, and taking hold of that nature with a Divine power of spiritual life; if we have shown it to be founded in facts of nature and history as revealing God, and neither irrational nor unreasonable, even where it transcends reason and science, but in remarkable harmony with the spirit of both these products of our intellectual life; above all if we have even partially succeeded in pointing out that this body of truth which we call religion is to be received not blindly as dogma imposed by authority from without, nor yet discovered by the observations of experience and the processes of reason, but entering the soul as a living conviction full of light and life and power, the demonstration of the Holy Spirit, and if we succeed in turning any of our readers away from the obscuring mists of modern controversies to this pure light of truth which shines within, then to God be glory and praise both now and for ever. Amen.

THE END